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THE
ANTIDOTE;
OR AN
ENQUIRY

INTO THE MERITS OF A BOOK, ENTITLED

A JOURNEY INTO SIBERIA,
MADE IN MDCCLXI

IN OBEDIENCE TO

AN ORDER OF THE FRENCH KING,

AND PUBLISHED, WITH APPROBATION,

BY THE ABBE' CHAPPE D'AUTEROCHE,
OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES: *K*

In which many essential Errors and Misrepresentations
are pointed out and confuted; and many interesting
Anecdotes added, for the better Elucidation of the
several Matters necessarily discussed :

BY A LOVER OF TRUTH.

The empress

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH BY A LADY,
AND DEDICATED, WITH PERMISSION,
TO HER IMPERIAL MAJESTY THE CZARINA.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR S. LEACROFT, OPPOSITE SPRING-GARDEN,
CHARING-CROSS. MDCCLXXII.

7

Jos: Banks

T O

HER IMPERIAL MAJESTY,

C A T H A R I N E

/ T H E S E C O N D ,

EMPRESS OF ALL THE RUSSIAS.

M A D A M ,

IT were vain to attempt, in the usual language of dedication, a laboured eulogy upon the many royal virtues which render you at this time the pride and delight of your own subjects, and the admiration of Europe: they are indeed superior to all praise: the world can have but one voice upon your Imperial Majesty's character. A nation, however, too prone to envy and discord, has, by studied efforts, endeavoured to cast a gloom upon the country which is happy enough to be under your Imperial Majesty's dominion: many of their attempts have but served to increase your glory: yet, as the ignorant (too many in all nations)

nations) are to be biased by the most absurd accounts, when published by *authority*, and *with approbation*, the spirit of an Englishwoman, though at an early period of life, and with a conscious feeling of her inequality to the task, could not refuse itself the satisfaction of translating into her mother tongue the *Antidote* to L'Abbé Chappé's envenomed performance.

Happy, if this feeble effort of a virgin pen can in any degree obtain the approbation of the first and greatest woman of the present age, and rescue from misrepresentation the character of her people! It has been the work of those hours which had otherwise, most probably, been given up to pursuits which young women generally call pleasure.

With a mixture of satisfaction as to the undertaking, and of apprehension for the manner in which it may be received, the Translatress presumes to lay at your Imperial Majesty's feet, this humble testimony of the most fervent zeal, and profound respect, of

AN ENGLISHWOMAN.

T H E R E A D E R.

ALTHOUGH an instructive Preface be generally a proper introduction to any publication, yet to this work, one of that, or any other kind, will appear useless, when it is known that the scope and display can as soon be learned from the first pages of the book, as from any preliminary account. But whilst so little need here be said of the subject itself, a few words must be premised with respect to our Russian author's manner of writing, which, by being more than commonly animated, has become an object of necessary attention in the translation.

The reader should therefore be informed, that through a style well framed for disputation, our original everywhere discovers the most acute feelings of resentment against the Abbé Chappe the French traveller's malicious misrepresentations of all matters, as well as his dislike to whatever bears the appellation of Russian; and that this degree of animosity has prompted our author to a virulence of expression, a minuteness of vindication,

cation, and a sharpness of recrimination, that cannot altogether be relished by a candid mind.

These obstacles so obviously disagreeable, have in a great measure been removed in this free translation; yet, as it has not been possible entirely to get clear of them, some indulgence must still be hoped for, as due to a champion standing forth in defence of the honour of his injured country, who must be allowed to lay about him with spirit, and indiscriminately to deal out invectives and blows to those with whom he enters the lists.



A N
ANTIDOTAL EXAMINATION

O F T H E

ABBE' CHAPPE D'AUTEROCHE'S

JOURNEY from PARIS to TOBOLSK,

WITH THE LEVEL OF THAT ROAD, &c.



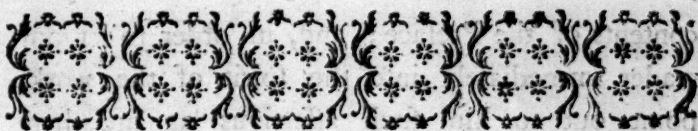
ANALYTICAL EXAMINATION

OF THE

AMERICAN CHURCH BAPTIST CHURCH

MODERNLY REVISED BY T. B. TOBOLSKY

WITH THE TESTS OF BRATISLAVA, 1881



REMARKS

UPON

AN INELEGANT BOOK,

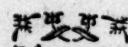
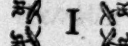

ELEGANTLY PRINTED, AND ENTITLED

A JOURNEY INTO SIBERIA,

BY ORDER OF THE FRENCH KING, &c.



Examination of the TITLE and PREFACE.

 T must be readily enough granted to be
 I an undertaking so very impracticable for
 a person travelling post from Paris to Tobolsk, to fulfill what the Title-page of this Journey promises, that we need not, by way of introduction, take the trouble to prove a matter which must appear obvious in every subsequent page. We shall therefore leave it to its merit in the course of this work, and now begin with examining the

contents of the Preface; and, in order to let our reader immediately into the spirit of the work, point out to him such assertions as are here *ingenuously* set forth, and which seem intended as rules for the author's future remarks.

In the second page of the Preface, *Mr. L'Abbé* artfully begins to suspect his undertaking to be beyond his strength: he affectedly capitulates, and says, "It is *not* the *History* of Russia that he means to give us: he will only add to the knowledge we already have: he will relate facts, calculated to throw a new light upon its Civil, Moral, and Political History."

I give you my word, *Mr. L'Abbé Chappe*, that I shall really relate facts, calculated to throw a new light upon the absurdity, as well as want of accuracy, displayed throughout the whole of your curious performance: for it must be allowed, that at least two thirds of your book are either mere prattle, or strains of rancour and animosity. The drawings of *Mr. Le Prince* are by far the best part of the work. What a pity it is that such elegant cuts should be allowed to ornament so paltry a work!

In the third page of your Preface, you mention the great inaccuracy of a map of Russia, published in 1745, which you pretend to have corrected. Is it designedly, *Mr. L'Abbé*, that you omit mentioning Professor Gmelin's Journal? I suspect, however, it was of great use to you: surely
you

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you here outwitted yourself; a few citations from so learned a man would have given an air of credibility to your work. It is no difficult matter to guess, that a man who gives the map of a country, which he is only acquainted with by having travelled post day and night through it, must have copied it from others. Ingenuoufness would have given *one* merit to your book, which God knows it wants. I leave it to the learned to judge of the *Abbé's* levels from Paris to Tobolsk, and can only wish that his observations upon the transit of Venus may be of more use to astronomy, more credible, and less repugnant to common sense. I shall farther add, by way of remark, that there are many books, that would be reduced to a very few pages and some prints, if nothing but usefull and sensible things were left in them. Why, *Abbè!* you are more learned than Solomon: his knowledge extended from the cedar to the hyssop, and even that has been called in quest on: yours is confined to no such narrow limits; things you have *not* seen, you are as well versed in, as those you have seen.

Pray, reader, observe: the eleventh page of the *Abbé's* Preface tells us, "the maps of the road from Paris to Tobolsk contain *all* the positions of the fossils." Observe, *all* the positions: and a few lines lower, he says, "The height of those positions is determined in the profil, as is that

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of the rivers, mountains, and, principally of the different fossils *that I have seen.*" He has then given the account of those he saw as he ran post, and of those he has not seen at all. Belonging to the Royal Academy must be a great help to imagination, if we judge by the *Abbé*. But this is not enough; let us proceed: "The levels (says he) have been particularly advantageous to me, as they have enabled me to describe the mountains upon the maps, by the shades expressive of their different heights; and by this means to exhibit nature, which is a thing too much neglected in geography." What strange quackery this is! Surely, *Abbé*, you mean to joke! You do not think it sufficient to give us all the fossils, the views of rivers and mountains; but you must colour your maps as you go, and give the mountains different shades to shew their height; and all this, travelling post: what an inimitable man this *Abbé* is! he sees every thing with the cast of an eye. Happy, happy Academy! to have made choice of such an *observer*! I shall take no notice of the astronomical remark upon the Transit of Venus; I have no doubt of its being made with the utmost precision: his exactness in other particulars authorises me to think so.

The fourteenth page offers a more striking instance of our *Abbé's* perspicuity: he observes, among a number of curious remarks upon
thunder,

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thunder, that “ with a bar of iron he kept in awe this timid and superstitious people (in Siberia) and saved his observatory from the insults it was daily threatened with, his first experiments having thrown a terror into the minds of the ignorant natives.” The *Abbé* is fond of general remarks; his book is full of little else: he deems a whole nation fearful, because some individuals got out of the way when he was about to attract the lightning with an iron bar. I’ll wager, the *Abbé* took care to keep himself on that side of the bar where the least danger was. Am I to follow your maxims, *Mons. Chappe*, and conclude from thence, that all the Gauls, *of whom you are one*, (though you be an academician) are cowards?

When you have answered me this question, I shall beg of you to name me the nation, among which the old and foolish are free from superstition. I must own the *Abbé* has a philosophic eye; he does not attend to trifles; ’tis the nation he aims at: but he does not consider that men inhabit the whole globe, and are much the same in every part of it. From this silly circumstance of his iron bar, he dares to pronounce a nation timid, that has made more conquests than the Romans. Go! *Mons. Chappe*, ask the Swedes, the Prussians, the Poles, and Moustapha the Victorious, (*who was made the cat’s paw to scratch the chesnuts out of the fire*) whether the Russians

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are timid ! they can best tell you. " You thought yourself a very great man, I fancy, when you was throwing your spleen (or that of others) upon paper, in your closet, against a nation that loaded you with civility and tokens of attention : you dare to pronounce them timid, while you yourself was dying with fear, and was persecuting the governors to let you have guards to secure your safety ; a thing which the fearful Russians never think of. You have taken great pains to make the Russians appear despicable ; but they prove fruitless : for learn, *Abbé*, those only are so, who, without wit, scribble, see things as they are not, and interpret every circumstance according to their own rancour and malice.

I must here for a moment quit the *Abbé*, to give an account of a circumstance relative to electricity, very common in Russia, and little known in the rest of Europe. During the hard frosts the children often amuse themselves with rubbing the furniture, in a dark corner of the room, with a bit of cloth or fur, till they draw sparks of fire out of it : this is so common, that it often is the amusement of a whole family, and is a new proof how wrongfully the *Abbé* taxes the inhabitants with timidity and superstition, in regard to his electrical experiments.

There is no nation extant, that has been abused with more falsity, absurdity, and impertinence, than the Russians ; yet a philosophic and
unpre-

A JOURNEY TO SIBERIA: 9

unprejudiced eye, upon comparing them to all the other European nations, will find them pretty much upon a level with others. I hope to prove what I advance. All those that have as yet attempted to give an account of Russia, have been foreigners, who, for want of a competent knowledge of the language and country, have told what appeared to them, not what really was: for instance, German writers, prejudiced in favour of their own country, looked for Germans in Russia; the disappointment put them out of humour; for the Russians were certainly in the wrong to be Russians at home. Other writers have done the same; they have found fault with the Russian manners differing from theirs. The Gallic writers have undoubtedly not been behind-hand in this particular; they who are proud of bearing a sway even in trifles, and who disapprove of every thing that is not done as in France: unluckily for Russia, it has been a barrier in their way; they can only revenge themselves by shewing it in a false light. Poor, pitiful, mean revenge! what can be expected from it?

After the Preface, I find a Table of the Contents, which I shall say nothing to, as every one has a right to put their ideas into the sort of order that best suits them; but when there is a confusion in them, it influences the whole of the work. To this follows the Extract of the Registers of the Royal Academy of Sciences at
Paris,

Paris, August 31, 1768. I here give it word for word.

“ Messieurs de Jussieu, d’Alembert, and Bezout, who were named to examine the account “ *Monf. L’Abbé Chappe* proposes to publish of “ the journey he made into Siberia, in order “ to make astronomical observations upon the “ Transit of Venus, and the History of Kamtchatka, “ having given their opinion of it, the Academy “ has judged the work worthy of impresson ; “ in witness whereof I have signed the present “ certificate at Paris, August 31, 1768.

“ GRAND JEAN DE FOUCHI,

“ Perpetual Secretary of the Royal

“ Academy of Sciences.”

Does not the reading this tempt one to enquire, whether the examination of the academicians is like Moliere’s consultation of physicians? Can it be the Great *d’Alembert* that has given his sanction to such a *collection* of contradictions, stupidity, and nonsense? Can it be the greatest geometrician in Europe, that sublime genius, that friend to truth, that philosopher, the ornament of the age, that examines and gives his approbation—to what? To the least philosophical work that for many years has presumptuously been offered to the press, full of emphatical absurdity, and disregarding truth upon all occasions; meant merely to throw a ridicule upon a whole nation, and make it seem despicable. Illustrious philosopher!

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philosopher! is it consistent with your character to allow your name to set off the quackery of this *Abbé*? Did *Monf. Chappe's* astronomical calculations run away with all your attention? or is it requisite only for calculations? Does not a great empire, slandered, offended, calumniated, in every page of the book that you have judged worthy of being published, call for some sort of notice? Could you even pass over that, where was your regard to truth! The manifest deviations from it in every line are too palpable to pass unnoticed. Can you have been deceived? or is it possible you should not have observed that it was in *riding post* the *Abbé* took levels, corrected maps, distributed kicks and cuffs to his guides, placed and displaced fossils, coloured mountains in shades to show their different heights, &c. But how can one attempt saying *all* our dear *Abbé* did, as he travelled day and night?—he surely stands unrivaled.

THANKS TO MY STARS! I have at length got to the outsetting of the work. I shall not comment upon your resolution of going by sea, which it was necessary to inform us of, that we might partake of your joy for having changed your mind and gone by land, which prevented your sharing the fate of the other passengers on board the ship you intended going in, who were all lost: but upon my word, *Abbé*, it would have been greatly to the advantage of truth, had you
gone

gone with them. I shall pass over the quagmires of *Alsacia*, and the fogs of the Danube, which, according to your account, make the navigation of this river uncertain. But what can you have been thinking of, good *Abbé*, when, after having mentioned these dreadful fogs, you tell us, that as there is no good chart extant of this part of the Danube, “you took this opportunity of tracing one with the utmost precision?” and immediately upon this, you add, “that the banks of the river were at the time overflowed.” Contradictions upon contradictions, *Mons. L’Abbé*! either there was no fog or overflowing, or you traced out no maps, or they were very inaccurate ones, or you copied those made by others, and put your name to them! Then you continue, “It was necessary to discover the arches (of the bridges) at a great *distance*, to chuse those where the current was least rapid.” And what became of the fog, *Abbé*? did it not prevent your seeing at a *great distance*?—It is probably to augment the size of his book, that in the fourth page, the *Abbé*, with an admirable simplicity, relates the giddiness that induced him to mistake a Jew’s epitaph in Hebrew for a piece of antiquity worthy of being transmitted to Paris; and that, after having laboured hard to make it out, some peasants told him what it was; upon which he retired, (ashamed of himself perhaps) and went home to make a hearty supper. I congratulate you,

you, my good *Abbé*, upon this ingenious tale, fit to make a figure in the famous *Voyage by Sea, and Journey by Land, from Paris to St. Cloud.*

The *Abbé* certainly possessed an amazing partiality for his own works, or he must now and then have been sensible he was writing nonsense. Why, there is no end to your astonishments, *Abbé*: a few lines ago, it was at a Jew's epitaph, now it is a young lady between fifteen and sixteen you meet with, and of whom you compose extempore the prettiest little romance that ever was heard of. This is the traveller's privilege. Alas! it will not be the last time the *Abbé* avails himself of it: he makes frequent excursions into Utopia: the Young Lady and the Epitaph are flowers that he scatters as he goes. Christmas eve costs the *Abbé* his portmanteau; and this gives him an opportunity of relating the loss of his shirts; an important anecdote, which must be infinitely interesting to the reader, and promises greatly for the sequel of the book. Another anecdote, not less remarkable, follows: the wooden bridge at Lintz is three hundred and fifty paces long, accurately measured. This is worthy of observation—don't forget it, reader: the *Abbé*, I hope, will tell you why; I declare *I cannot*. He ventures again into the fogs of the Danube, and arrives at Vienna the 31st of December, 1760. He there gets acquainted with their Imperial Majesties, and from his manner of giving

giving this account, you will be fully persuaded, that it was they, and not ~~he~~, that sought the acquaintance. I love an air of importance exceedingly: the *Abbé* has a right to it; his writings have certainly acquired him a reputation: but what kind of reputation? go on, good reader, and judge.

As the *Abbé's* knowledge is universal, he gives a short description of the arsenal at Vienna. He gets his baggage from the custom-house without being searched. Are not you delighted with this circumstance, reader? The Gauls are fond of escaping the custom-house officers in all countries: they term their strictness *incivility*, and as such willingly dispense with it.

Here follows a digression upon barometers, that I shall not enter into; and another upon electricity, which cures rheumatisms at Vienna more efficaciously than at Paris.

I know the reason why, but I am too discreet to tell. I never disclose a secret, not even such as every body may know. He leaves Vienna, passes like lightning through Nikolsburg; from thence to Brunn; yet gives circumstantial descriptions of both places: "The citadel at Brunn is placed on an eminence." Astonishing! is it not? Disasters befall our *Abbé*; bad roads, broken wheels, the loss of a barometer, an overturn into a ditch, no sleep all night, loss of another barometer, unloading the carriage, "which (he adds) we were obliged to do on all occasions."

See

See how kind the *Abbé* is! he would not for the world omit a single circumstance; every thing relative to himself is worthy of being transmitted to posterity: his book is still more instructive than entertaining; he cannot travel without flambeaux: he begins to fear he shall not reach Tobolsky. The river Beanavoda (*Bela Voda*, he would say, and which means *White Water*) is thirty *toises* broad—he wades through it—he arrives in Neutischein at night—leaves it in the morning—the Carpathian mountains are on his right, at the distance of a league, or a league and a half—he dines at Friedeck—gives a description of the women's petticoats, which are like all the petticoats in the world: but our academicians measure them, and upon an exact survey finds them shorter: he does not like their veils, finds fault with their stockings, of which he gives a very minute account; and then philosophically decides, that their dress is as ridiculous as their figure. Pray, *Abbé*, what may you mean by a ridiculous dress? is it that which is not worn at Paris? You are likely to meet with numbers whose taste is enough depraved to maintain, that the most ridiculous of all dresses is the French, which all Europe takes so much pains to imitate: it is besides unwholesome, too cool in winter, too hot in summer. Ask your own painters, whether ever they have the courage to dress out their pictures fashionably: I dare answer for the contrary,

contrary, if they have any sense. Nothing so hideous in my eye as the dress of a French woman: a round back, flat breasts; and then as to their heads, either such a show of hair as makes the face the least part of it, or it is stuffed into a sort of basket, which they call a great cap. And what think you of rouge, white paint, pomatums, and washes, *Abbé*? does your partiality extend to them too?

Hard fate to be obliged to run post with this *Abbé*! let us however keep up with him if we can. The 12th of January he was very cold, the 13th and 14th still more so. He arrives at Bilitz, then at Zator—here he has his carriage mended—the 19th brings him to Cracow—and the 22d to Warsaw, where the want of inns would have exposed him to lie in the street, had it not been for the hospitality of the Polanders. The French ambassador there is very civil to him; so is the king of Poland, and the prince of Courland. The Polish women please him: he describes their dress. The *Abbé* has a partiality for *the toilette*; he never fails commenting upon it. He adds, that love is little known in this country; that their virtue is the effect of superstition, rather than of polished manners, of the climate, or of true principles of religion. Guess, reader, if you can, what the *Abbé* means! and then trust to him, if you feel yourself so inclined. He then talks of the carnival, of the etiquette,
of

of ceremony, and of spleen; describes their *ridottos*, dances, music, government, nobles, peasants, cattle, tillage, and agriculture. Nothing escapes unnoticed. All this fills up a page, or a page and a half: then follow, flax, washing, and the *kantzouk*, the number of servants, their messes, taxes, and a story which the *Abbé* invents about the punishment of those who steal honey. He leaves Warsaw, and is delighted with the opportunity of relating the murder of a whole family by some Russian carriers; which takes up as much of his paper as the account of all Poland. The reason is obvious; the villains were *Russians*; there was a necessity for exposing this fact in its most odious light: but I should be glad if the *Abbé* would take the trouble to name the nation that has not produced monsters. Does there pass a single night at Paris without some murder or robbery, notwithstanding the daily exhibitions at the *Greve*? He says, that the Poles are but little acquainted with those crimes. Go, and make the experiment, *Abbé*, and you will see how the Confederates will treat you: it is attempting too much, to think of persuading us now that there are no highway robberies in that country. At the end of all this, he thinks it wrong that Russia should reclaim its subjects; and adds, that foreigners were astonished at it. I believe, that excepting the *Abbé*, and those who are as strongly prejudiced

as he is, nobody will be astonished that Russia allows its subjects to be under no jurisdiction but its own. A description of Bialistok.—The *Ablé* goes on, and sees every thing. Arrived at Sokolka, he expatiates on the citadel, draw-bridge, hillocks, granite stones of different colours and size, pebbles, &c. he is never at a stand; his imagination constantly supplies the want of materials to furnish the reader with amusement.

A minute detail of a Jew's house, and the rags it contained. Do you mean to impose upon us, *Abbé*, when you say the peasants of Lithuania want bread in winter? Then follows a commentary upon four cabbage—he sleeps upon straw—is fatigued—afraid he shall get no horses—succeeds however—passes a village and gets to Kowno, from thence to Mittau: “This is a fine town, (says he) but in general not well built.” How can such circumstances go together; fine, but ill built! What then do you reckon the beauty of a town to consist in?—He passes the frontiers of Courland, and gets to Riga—an exact description of a little inn that he puts up at—and a remarkable circumstance: “The people in it were smoaking and drinking: the clouds of smoak were so thick, that people at the other end of the room were scarcely to be discerned.” Had the *Abbé* travelled in Holland and Germany, he would have been less astonished at the smoak of tobacco: notwithstanding the smoak, however,
the

the *Abbé* admires the pretty, well-shaped servant-maids, and assures us "they did not pride themselves upon a profession of chastity." Are these tales calculated to amuse the academy, *Abbé*? Upon my word I blush for you.—He makes an indifferent supper—no body knows why; for Riga is not a place where good provisions are wanting: he then goes to bed—the next morning he takes a view of the town—gives a sort of description of it—and finishes by saying, "There are few nobles in it, except among the strangers." Are you ignorant, *Abbé*, that there is no such thing as a *noble* of Riga? All the nobles thereabout are Livonians, who are in town during the winter, and in the country in summer. You will be under difficulties, I fancy, to prove that the Livonian nobles are strangers at Riga, which is at present the capital of the province. One thing I must say for our *Abbé*; he has a very grateful heart; he never mentions any but those who have given him either dinners or suppers. He received great civilities from Mr. de Vittinghoff, "who (he says) married the daughter of the famous General Munich, although that gentleman was banished into Siberia." It was not the daughter, but the grand-daughter of General Munich, Mr. de Vittinghoff married: her father, Count Munich, who is at present privy counsellor, was sent to Vologda, but never into Siberia; and Madame de Vittinghoff, then six weeks old, was

left to the care of her grandmother Madame Mengden, who brought her up, and thus disposed of her.

It was very necessary we should be informed of the quarrels of the postilions, of the drunkenness of the interpreter, and of their readiness to jump at the sight of a *rouble*, as well as of all the other accidents that befell the *Abbé* upon his road, because he was obstinately resolved to travel in carriages rather than sledges, which are the customary conveyances of the country; a custom founded on reason, and the impossibility of making use of wheels, on account of the depth of the snow: but the *Abbé* is not capable of conceiving, that every nation has its particular customs; every thing appears strange to him that he has not seen in France.

The 13th of February brings him to St. Petersburg, where he immediately enters into a debate with the Academy of Sciences, on account of its having destined one of its *own* members to make the observations at Tobolsky. The *Abbé*, according to his own words, caballed so effectually at court, and among the ministers, that it was finally acquiesced in, that he should go in preference to one of the members of the academy of *Petersburg*. Allow me here, *Mons. L'Abbé*, to make a short digression. The Title-page of your book tells us, that it was by order of the king of France you were sent into Siberia,

to make observations upon the tranfit of Venus ; and you begin your work with these words : “ Being ordered by the king, and appointed by the academy,” &c.—Persuaded that at least in this particular I might trust you, I was going on with all the good faith imaginable, when, to my great astonishment, I find in page 25, that it was the academy at St. Petersburg that had sent for you, and, upon your slow motions, had fixed upon a member of its own to make the wished-for observations. How will you contrive to solve this difficulty, *Abbé* ? It will require all the fertility of your imagination to get well out of such scrapes.

He sets out from Petersburg for Tobolsky ; and here, reader, you will learn (whether, or not, you are desirous so to do) every particular instrument, utensil, &c. that the *Ablé* thought necessary to equip himself with for the continuation of his journey : and you will also have an interesting account,* given with the most scrupulous precision, of every nail and peg necessary to the construction of that marvellous machine, called a sledge. But why should we wonder at the minuteness of this detail ? Is it not *our dear Abbé’s* equipage ? How could it fail of being a matter of consequence

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to

* This is one, among many instances of the English translator’s desire of making *Mons. Chappe* appear less absurd : he has made a note of the description of the sledge, which the *Abbé* had thought worthy of a place in the body of his work.

to posterity? A very well engraved print gives the *finishing stroke* to this description. The chancellor, Count de Worontzow, is so kind as to give the *Abbé* a serjeant to serve as guide; and he takes with him four flasks of wine, which were given him by Mons. de Breteuil, and which will prove a matter of importance hereafter—it was the week before Lent.

Our *Abbé* (like the rest of his countrymen) makes sad work with foreign names, which he might easily avoid by translating them into his own language: however, I am not willing to quarrel with him about some vowels or consonants, more or less, in the word *Naslanitza* (in English, *Carnival*); I have grievances enough to bring against him without attending to such trifles, and am only desirous to warn you, good reader, in case you should ever go to Russia, not to attempt pronouncing the words as the *Ablé* spells them, because it would be impossible for you to make yourself understood. Another thing give me leave to apprise you of, which is, that (notwithstanding Mons. Chappe's high colourings) the common people in Russia neither drink, nor fall into greater excesses during the carnival, than those of any other nation, where Lent is strictly observed: besides this, the love of drinking diminishes yearly in Russia, both from the high price of brandy, and from the refinement of their morals, in which they daily more and
more

more *improve*. At Tschoudowai the *Abbé* gets out of his sledge to warm himself—he wants his dinner—and upon calling about him to get all his *apparatus* together, he finds some of his flasks emptied. But let us hear his own words: “On making some enquiries into this matter, (says he) one of my guides told me it was to be laid to their charge.” He adds, “I gave the fellow that said this to me such an answer, that he was as quick in getting down stairs, as I had been in my reply.” Then he applauds his own resolution in knocking the man down, and adds, that “this is the only idea the Russians have of subordination.” It is, probably, by way of apology for your own passionate disposition, *Abbé*, that you throw out this injurious reflection. To judge by his own words, one would imagine it was necessary to slay a Russian, to make him submissive. *Mons. Chappe* does not blush to advance, “that a Russian acknowledges no master that does not treat him with harshness.” There is no sort of difficulty in demonstrating the falsity of this assertion—the mild and happy reigns of the empresses Elizabeth, and Catharine the Second, prove the contrary. Learn from me, *Abbé*, that there is not a set of people, who will suffer themselves to be more easily governed, than the Russians in general. Learn also, that there are no better regulated private families in Russia, than those where corporal punishment of the

servants is not in practice. And besides all this, learn, *Abbé*, that you might have been made to pay very dear for your fit of anger. What right had you, I pray, to buffet about those whom the court had appointed to be your guides? You have infinite sweetness of temper, my good sturdy philosopher. Did you not think there was some respect due to the empress's uniform, which your serjeant wore? What, I wonder, would have been said in France, of a Russian, who, on account of having unexpectedly found a flask of wine emptied, had knocked down some person who (by particular attention) had been sent to attend him. It is more than likely abuse would have been the least part of what he would have met with. I shall make no commentaries upon the *Abbé's* quarrel with his watch-maker, nor upon his account of all the shocks he met with during his journey.

The 14th of March he arrives at Moscow, where he is received with the greatest friendship by the Chancellor Worontzow's brother, as well as by his lady. Don't you admire the *Abbé's* familiar style, reader, when he makes mention of people of quality? It agrees very well with the sweetness of his manners towards his fellow travellers, which he has just been giving us a little example of. "The family of the Worontzows (he says) are the protectors of strangers: sincerity and good-nature, *less frequent in Russia* than

than any where else, are conspicuous qualities in them from the first moment of their acquaintance." *Abbé*, you speak well of the Worontzow family; you have good reason so to do, they were very civil to you. But why take this opportunity of casting a reflexion upon the nation? They will be very little obliged to you for taking off your hat to them, to fling it into the face of their countrymen: you make them a very bad return for their kindness to you. Why will you pretend to aver, that sincerity and good-nature are less frequent in Russia than any where else? *Abbé*, *Abbé*! is it in France we are to look for sincerity? Which is the country where man is not man? I mean not to say, that sincerity is no inherent quality in man; but are there not numberless causes that oblige men to circumspection in all countries? and surely in none more tyrannically than in France. As to good-nature, it is not to be acquired; there are learned men that *want* it, and ignorant men that possess it. In spite then of all your malice, *Abbé*, Russia being inhabited by *men*, they will prove the same there as in every other part of the globe.

The *Abbé* leaves Moscow the 13th of March in the morning, and magisterially enjoins his attendants to follow him. The *Abbé* was born for command, he never forgets his authority a moment; his actions agree perfectly with his words:

words: his civility is never thrown away upon inferiors; he hoards it all up for his friends of quality. In another page he observes, that "the rivers in the North are very quickly frozen over: their surface does not become uneven, as that of the Seine at Paris, but is perfectly smooth." Don't you know, *Abbé*, that it often happens that the same river freezes over very smooth one year, and very rough another? When it is but a little rough, the great falls of snow soon make it even: often a slight thaw produces the same effect. The cracks that the *Abbé* talks of in the ice, are generally occasioned by the variation in the height of the water, which depends upon the wind. But how can you expect again to impose upon us, when you say, (after mentioning a hole that one of your horses fell into) "There are many such holes to be met with, where the water never freezes, although the ice around is three feet thick, and the cold so very severe, that it will freeze brandy and spirit of wine?" The *Abbé* is afraid he should not have the appearance of a traveller, were he to omit the marvellous in his accounts; but he will find it rather difficult, I fancy, to convince his readers, that the Russians trace their high-road (in winter) over holes big enough to drown people; while it is very well known it depends upon themselves to give it any direction they please. And now let me explain to you, *Mons.*
L'Abbé,

L'Abbé, that these frightful holes, which you say never freeze, are little square places (in Russian named *Proloubi*) which the inhabitants keep open to get at water, and to wash their linen; and that your postilion must have missed his way, when he contrived to get your horse into one of them; for I give you my word the Russians are far too prudent to make these holes in their highway, especially as it is customary to travel there mostly by night. The *Abbé* does not know how to get by these holes; they lead him into a dissertation of two pages and a half—I don't intend to let them do the same by me. Before he reaches Niznei Nowgorod, our *Abbé* contrives to get up to his knees in a heap of snow, as he is contemplating a hillock. And was *this* too to be transmitted to posterity? Why, *Abbé*, I don't suppose there is a link-boy in Russia who has not done the same. *Mons. Chappe* is surprised that at the latter end of March he finds but little snow about Niznei Nowgorod: he does not know that this is the time when the snow melts in those countries.

The *Abbé* tells us he was loaded with letters of recommendation, by means of which “he received very great assistance:” and then, as usual, (a fresh instance of his malevolence) “if I have sometimes been in disagreeable situations, this can only be ascribed to the nature of the climate, and the disposition of the common people.”

people." *Monf. L'Abbé*, all your disagreeable situations (according to your own words) have as yet only consisted of broken wheels, bad roads, a few overturns into the snow, that made you swear; a flask of wine emptied, that you made up for to yourself, by giving your guide a box on the ear; and such like accidents. How were the natives accountable for these? Fie upon you! *Abbé*, you abuse for the sake of abuse, and gain nothing by it but the pleasure of exposing yourself, and proving your ill will, as much as your ingratitude; for you certainly had all the reason in the world to be thankful; for the kindnesses done you were remarkable.

A following page gives us the description of Niznei Nowgorod: it is ill built, and most of the houses of wood, as are the greatest number of the towns in Russia: this town was reduced to ashes in the year 1767, and was rebuilt in brick and stone, from a regular plan, as all the towns have been that this misfortune has befallen since the reign of Catharine the Second; such as Twer, which is already completed, thanks to our gracious empress, who ordered three hundred thousand roubles to be paid out of her own purse to the inhabitants, with this condition, that two hundred thousand were to be returned her at the end of ten years, and the remaining hundred thousand she intended as a free gift. And here, reader, I will give you a list of all the

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the towns that have thus been raised from their ashes: Twer, Yambourg, Starnia, Roussa, Derpt, Dorogoboufch, Kargaper, Cafan, Beloofero, Torjok, Serpoohof, Belgorod, Astracan, Tumen, Alexin, Beloi, Niznei Nowgorod, and Yaroslaf. The imperial treasure has lent one million thirty-seven thousand two hundred and thirty-eight roubles, which are all to be paid back in the same manner as above mentioned. But to return to our *Abbé*, he says, "Nisnei Nowgorod is among the second class of Russian towns with respect to its size, and very deservedly reckoned among the first on account of its trade, because it is the mart of all the country round about; which renders it very commercial: seven or eight hundred strangers are to be seen there every day in summer time for the space of four months in the year: notwithstanding this the people of the town are not rich, because the greatest part of the trade is carried on for the sovereign." —There is not any one branch of trade in Russia, *Abbé*, that the crown monopolises. The odious denomination of *despotic*, which the *Abbé* is continually giving to the sovereign of Russia, is another proof of his ill-will. What is understood in France by the word Sovereign? Is it a king that makes laws? Our sovereign does the same. You have parliaments that refuse to pass improper ones, but which are forced after (notwithstanding their reluctance) to comply.

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We have a senate, whose right is equal to that of your parliament; but our sovereigns avoid its remonstrances, by only making laws at its suggestion, or by making them in such a manner as to take away all room for remonstrance. The king of France, his ministers, and their favourites, can send people into the *Bastile*; and there have them judged *as they please*. Our secret committee did the same thing, but it was abolished in the year 1762; and your Bastile is still extant in all its terror. If your sovereigns are unjust, they may take away your estates and your life: so they may with us, *Monf. L'Abbé*. Your king cannot however break through established laws without loud complaints from the people: so it is in Russia also. You will alledge your fundamental laws, *Abbé*. I answer, they are problems ever undecided. How often have your parliaments maintained such a thing to be either for or against your fundamental laws! and how often has the court made no other answer than giving them the lie, sending an order to silence them, or even sometimes for banishment! You will tell me these very disputes prove there are fundamental laws: and do not the orders for silence, or for banishment, prove an absolute power, *Abbé*? I know you are made to believe, your country is the centre of liberty, while in truth you dare hardly say your souls are your own. Why does a whole nation swallow such gross
deceit?

deceit? Because they are taught to persuade themselves out of the evidence of their senses; the orators, priests, monks, &c. take such pains to lull you with pleasing dreams. How can you ever have the least desire of waking? Very likely it would not be safe in France to attempt contradiction: besides, great care is taken that you should always have a high opinion of the merit and capacity of those that govern; and, to prevent these from making themselves odious by the abuse of the authority entrusted to them, particular injunctions are laid on them to set about their work with dexterity and some sort of circumspection. This is the reason why you often see orders intimated to inferiors, under the mask of mildness and civility, to persuade them that they are *invited* to *obey*; and that honour, obedience, duty, zeal, and submission, are synonymous terms. Do not therefore boast too loudly of your government, good *Abbé*; but let us rather join in praying to God, that we may always have sovereigns who know how to be just, and pay a proper respect to their own glory; and then we shall be happy enough. Pardon the liberty I take in setting you right, *Abbé*; there really was a necessity for it, and I am much afraid this will not be the last I shall find.

The *Abbé* says "the agents (of the sovereign) are so many tyrants." I do assure you, *Abbé*, our agents are not by one hundredth part so tyrannical

as the king of France's agents; nor have we by any means so many of them. I don't suppose, that upon an extent of sixteen thousand *werstes* in Russia, there are above two thousand employed by the crown; while you are so happy in France, *Mons. L'Abbé*, as to have eighty thousand and more upon an infinitely smaller space of ground. The difference is, that yours wallow in riches, by dint of pillaging the unhappy people, while ours barely get a sustenance.—There is no example of yours being called to account for their villainy: ours are punished upon the least show of insolence; the people themselves are allowed the privilege of carrying them before the magistrates, to answer any complaints they have to bring in against them. I can give you numberless examples of what I here advance, if you desire it, *Abbé*.—The town of Niznei Nowgorod, when you passed through it, *Abbé*, did not carry on all the trade it is capable of, on account of some dissensions among the inhabitants: these troubles were not put an end to till the year 1767, when the empress, during her residence in that town, laid down rules for forming a company, (not an exclusive one, as the *Abbé* is pleased to advance, but) such that every one, who takes an interest of one or more actions, may have a share in the trade, of corn, &c. with which this town supplies Petersburg in all the necessaries of life.

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Some pages farther, I find the following paragraph: "The young lads in this town, (Niznei Nowgorod) as well as in the neighbouring places, are married at fourteen or fifteen years of age; the girls at thirteen. It will certainly be imagined from this account, that the country must be well peopled; but we shall find it otherwise; and that it is necessary to marry the girls early, in order to prevent debauchery."

Monf. L'Abbé, the peasants and common people not only marry their sons at fourteen and fifteen years of age, but even at eight and nine, and that for the sake of having a workwoman the more, in the person of their son's wife: by the same rule they try to keep their daughters single as long as possible, because they don't choose to lose a workwoman. So you see, *Abbé*, it is not the disorderly inclinations of the women, that oblige them to marry their sons so young, as you are pleased to say. I shall very willingly agree with you, that these premature marriages are of very little use to the state; for which reason, methods to get the better of this custom have been sought for, and I hope will soon take place: the bishops are attentive to prevent these marriages as much as possible, and have of late succeeded greatly in their endeavours. It is only the inhabitants of some of the provinces in Russia that still retain this bad custom. In France it is usual among the great, and that does not astonish

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you, *Abbé*. We shall mention population hereafter. But methinks, *Abbé*, I observe you take great notice of the women—at Freideck it was their petticoats you measured—at Riga they did not seem to pride themselves upon a profession of chastity—and here again you marry them young to prevent debauchery. Why, *Abbé*! how do you think the academy will receive your partiality for the sex? Are such things fit to be laid before it?—The 21st the *Abbé* leaves Niznei Nowgorod—he is very fearful of the holes above mentioned—his postilions encourage him to trust himself to their experience. I fancy they were not a little diverted with the *Abbé*'s continual *quid pro quo*'s. There is no nation that has a more natural vein of humour than ours. He gets in and out of his sledge till he reaches Kouzmodemiansk: he says, “This is a pretty large village; the Russians call it a town.” If the name of a town has been given to it, *Abbé*, why will you be so perverse as to call it a village?

Mons. L'Abbé says, “From St. Petersburg I had hitherto met with no eminences great enough to be called mountains: this vast plain is barren in many places, and cultivated in others: on the other parts, nothing but pines and birch trees are to be found.” *Mons. L'Abbé*, you were travelling in winter, when the face of nature is covered with snow: how could you see whether the ground was cultivated or no? I have gone that
road

road in summer, and found the ground cultivated on either side, as far as my sight could reach: besides the pines and birch trees that the *Abbé* mentions, and of which there are whole forests in different parts of the country, the provinces of Niznei Nowgorod, and that of Casan, abound in lime-trees, oaks, and poplars: (a most convincing proof of which is, that these provinces furnish the floats of wood that are used for ship building): all the fields beside are enamelled with flowers; cherry-trees and peach-trees grow wild. The *Abbé* arrives at Czarevokoschaisk: he says, "This borough is dependent on the Empress alone." It is rather difficult to find out what the *Abbé* means by this. What we call in Russia *gossoudarewye*, or demesnes, are of two different sorts, the one belonging to the crown, and the other to the court: those of the crown have their own jurisdiction, but the supreme judicature belongs to the *woiwode* of the circle; while those that belong to the court are ruled by a separate council, which is called the Chancery of the court. None but such as are empowered by a sign manual of the Empress can impose any taxes upon these peasants: the ordinary imposition is very moderate; they only pay two roubles and seventy pence to the state. The *Abbé* is surprised to find a post-master's wife, aged forty, who having had twenty children, had but two left. This is no very extraordinary

discovery, *Abbé*; it is a very common thing in Russia; you will find numberless peasants in the same case: it is a great misfortune to the state, that no remedy has as yet been found to prevent this dreadful mortality among the children.

Fatal mishap! the *Abbé*'s last barometer is broken by an overturn of his sledge. The *Abbé* is mistaken in his account of the peasants subsisting only on bread and water in Lent, and the rest of the year on fish and *piroguis*. In Lent they eat fish and greens in great quantities, and the remainder of the year they eat soups and meat: there are numbers among the Russian peasants that boil a piece of meat either fresh or salt every day; and they dress it up either with cabbage, mushrooms, greens, or with barley. Cakes and pies are for Sundays and holidays. Pastry is called *pirogenie* in Russian; and pies, *piroguis*. The *Abbé* has thought proper to mention the pies made of that little kind of fish, called *snialki*, as the only sort that is known there. If the *Abbé* had taken the trouble to put his head out of the window, he would have seen different sorts of pastry selling at all the corners of the streets: but this would not have answered his end: he is desirous to make his readers believe that the most extreme poverty prevails all over Russia. Believe me, gentle reader, it exists only in his imagination, or rather in his pen. A Russian peasant is fifty times more at his ease, and happier, than

than a French one ; because he knows what he has to pay, and that taxes are only laid on him according to his ability. That this is very different in France, your miserable peasants daily experience. And now, for the proof of what I have been saying, learn, *Mons. L'Abbé*, that from the year 1748, till 1766, there were but six hundred thousand roubles remaining due to the crown by the people ; and that, when at the end of 1768, it was ordered that the new province of *Oucraina Slobodskaia*, situated between Belgorod, Woronez, and the Oucraina, (which must therefore not be confounded with what is commonly called Oucraina) should furnish to the imperial magazines, at market-price, a certain quantity of corn for the support of the army, numbers carried the money they received for it, to the parishes, to be put to pious uses, that they might bring down a blessing upon the arms of the Empress who made them so happy, saying at the same time, it was their duty to contribute to the defence of their country. Do you think, *Abbé*, they would have parted thus lightly with their money, had they been in the want you represent them ? I am sorry to be so often obliged to expose you, *Mons. Chappe*, but I cannot let such unmerited abuse pass unnoticed.

You are very good in taking so much trouble to explain to us why you do not like the Russian peasants manner of lighting their houses, neither

by day, nor by night: but I am much afraid you have bestowed your pains fruitlessly; for most of your readers will, I fancy, agree with me, that there is nothing so very astonishing in it, as the peasants all over the world live pretty nearly in the same manner. The *Abbé* says, "Their houses are of wood, and not constructed with much skill." Every peasant in Russia is his own architect, and constructs his house in the manner that may be most convenient for his family, his cattle, &c. The Russian peasants are naturally too prudent to run the risk of being suffocated in the manner the *Abbé* mentions, by heating their cottages to forty degrees of Réaumur's thermometer.—A description of the furniture the cottage contained, which I see nothing uncommon in, any more than in the women's cooking the victuals, which the *Abbé* takes notice of. "All these inhabitants (says the *Abbé*) appear to be attached to the Greek church." The *Abbé* has affirmed positively what to us has appeared very doubtful; and here, where he might with certainty affirm, he says *they appear*. Is not this singular, reader? Does it not look as if the *Abbé* meant to cast a doubt upon their religion, where certainly there is none? The Russians are universally attached to the Greek church, *Mons. Chappe*, and are likely to continue so.

He farther adds, "Each family has a small chapel in the house, where the guardian saint of the
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the family is placed." It is usual for the Russians to have one or more little images in the corner of the room: this the *Abbé* has chosen to call a chapel. He is again mistaken, when he affirms, that those images are looked upon as the guardian gods of the cottage. I wonder, *Abbé*, you should have fallen into this error, as it is very far from an uncommon thing in France to see a crucifix, an image of the Virgin Mary, or of some saint, in the corner of the room: formerly this was still more customary; but it vanishes by degrees, as people cease to value themselves upon having some religion. With us, those who are of a more religious turn, make a sign of the cross as they enter the room; others dispense with that ceremony. I imagine it is pretty much the same with you, *Monf. L'Abbé*. I fancy, my friend, the reader will have little more faith than myself, in your story of the pious personage who made himself sick by dint of praying. *Monf. Chappe's* conversations in Russian are rather suspicious, as he did not understand a word of the language.

The *Abbé* continues, "This custom of hanging up lamps, and lighting candles before these saints in their chapels, prevails all over Russia, even in the palace of the Empress." The custom of burning tapers and lamps before images and saints is as usual in the Romish as in the Greek church, *Abbé*; it has besides always been done of old; so that your astonishment in this particular is

very ill grounded : but it is too absurd in you to advance, that these little wax lights are to be found " even in the palace of the empress." I never knew any body succeed so happily as our *Abbé* in giving himself airs of consequence : he penetrated into the empress's private apartments : he was there quite at his ease without ceremony ; and as he has a great share of curiosity, he amused himself (when he had nothing better to do) by measuring, with the accuracy of an academician, the bits of candle he found there, and they were six or seven inches high, and one third of an inch thick. This carries an air of credibility with it ; believe me, however, good reader, the *Abbé* owes it all to the peculiar felicity of the invention he is blessed with. He never was in any of the empress's private apartments; nor are there to be found in them the little wax-lights he talks of, before or behind the images. After all this, reader, trust to the *Abbé's* tales. This very ingenious one is followed by another of a young woman, who, after having taken great pains to escape her husband's jealous eye, finds an opportunity of being alone with her lover, and immediately recollects she had forgot to pray to her saint ; upon which she runs away to make up for this neglect, and then returns to her gallant. Do you believe a word of this? I don't, upon my honour, notwithstanding

notwithstanding the approbation of the academy adorns the Title page.

The 25th day of March the *Abbé* arrives at Wiatka—he is so obliging as to accept of a dinner Madame de Perminow offers him—he leaves her at eight in the evening—she provides him with lanterns and flambeaux—he continues his road, and immediately upon this, page 45, he says, “as often as I got upon any eminence, I stopped to take a view of the circumjacent country.” He has forgot that Madame Perminow’s lanterns and flambeaux testify his travelling by night; so that he either did not stop upon the eminence, or, if he did, he was little the better for it. He says, “the country is only cultivated round about the villages.” The snow must have been still on the ground, because the *Abbé* was travelling in sledges: how then could he see whether the ground was cultivated or not? A certain proof of its being so, is, that it furnishes with corn the government of Archangel, part of the provinces between Casan and Tobolsk; and about Wiatka there are immense distilleries of brandy. After a few more overturns, he reaches Troitzkoie on the 26th, where he has his sledges repaired. Here a fresh instance offers, of the *Abbé*’s great goodness of heart—he falls asleep in his sledge during the night—he wakes some time afterwards, and finds himself alone. As he was sensible his companions had no reason to be
pleased

pleased with his usage of them, fear seizes his great soul: he suspected no less than that his *suite* had deserted him in the midst of the snows: his conscience told him he deserved it: but he soon found that his attendants, in spite of his ill-usage of them, both in thought, word, and deed, were not so ill-natured as himself; and that, on the contrary, they had been so attentive as not to disturb his sleep, when they went to warm themselves. At this moment, *Abbé*, I would not chuse to have you draw a comparison between them and yourself; you would be too great a loser: a good conscience is seldom attended with a soul so full of dark suspicion.

The *Abbé*, with no great sweetness either of temper or countenance, rouses his servant, whom, as well as the other attendants, he found lying by the side of young girls, (a good anecdote for the academy): the servant, accustomed to his ill-humour, probably exculpates himself by alledging the temptation; and the *Abbé* ends this important narrative, by saying, "I was obliged to put up with this affair." Did you observe, reader, how the *Abbé's* ill-humour was softened at the mention of the pretty girls? He affects to be gallant in many parts of his book: here he makes a virtue of necessity. Having made up the quarrel with *his people*, (he repeats *my people* as often as possible, to give him consequence, though he had but one servant among

among them; the rest were his fellow travellers) and having found his pistols, he sets out, armed cap-a-pié, as becomes a man of his exemplary courage. He arrives at Berezowska; and from thence at Roussinowskoie: he abuses the habitations of these two places, and the inhabitants, for the extent of twenty-five miles, which is the length of the road between Berezowska and Roussinowskoie. Every thing displeases the *Abbé*. Is it a forest he is passing? His splenetic pen describes it immense, thick, and dismal. Is it a plain? It looks uncultivated, uninhabited, &c. The roads to him seem narrow, though they are by all travellers allowed to be broader than in any other country: he finds inconveniences from meeting sledges, though there is no carriage less inconvenient to pass, even in a narrow road, than a travelling sledge. He complains of the depth of the snow. Page 48, his intrepidity fails him—he is in danger of being killed, because his sledge locks into another sledge as they pass—he however escapes unhurt: but, oh! dire mischance! “this last shock (he says) put my sledge cruelly out of repair. I now remained without any covering, exposed to the severity of the cold air.” Such as it is, *Abbé*, ’tis less severe than you; or it had taken a just revenge of all your foul abuse. After some more *overturns*, at every one of which the *Abbé* rolls himself in the snow, he arrives “at Solikamsk the 29th, at eight

eight in the evening, after having travelled one hundred and eighty werstes in this wretched condition." The *Abbé's* unequalled magnanimity terms travelling a hundred and eighty werstes in an open sledge "a wretched condition." Poor man, what a pitiable affair he makes of it!

At Solikamsk he goes to bed, then he gets up again, and proceeds to Mr. Demidoff's steward—is received with all possible attention and civility—takes up his residence there, and sets about repairing his sledges. Notwithstanding the *Abbé's* last thermometer might have been broken with his barometers long ago, he here observes, that it was fallen to ten or eleven degrees below 0. Admirable genius! inimitable *Abbé*! I look up to you with silent astonishment; nor is it I alone that am confounded at your merit. Don't you remember, reader, how sensible their imperial majesties were of it at Vienna? "They did not fail to show their gracious attention to the sciences and the academy, by desiring that I might be presented to them." See, in a former page of his book, whether these are not his own words. Are you not struck with his modesty, reader? It seems here to shine forth in too conspicuous a light to be overlooked. The *Abbé* from this speech can be considered in no other light than as a strolling academy, a magazine of sciences: he here leaves me so far behind him, that I am almost afraid to go on: there is, however,

however, some sort of encouragement to proceed, in the prospect that he will very soon let himself down again to an equality at least.

A description of Mr. Demidoff's house at Solikamsk, next claims our attention; his garden, hot-houses, apothecary's shop, and gardener, who, though a Russian, was expert in his business: here the *Abbé* provides himself with two new barometers, and gives one to the gardener. A description of Solikamsk.—The *Abbé* quarrels with Isbrand Ides for giving a pompous description of this place: he intends taking a particular view of it, probably for the sake of giving Isbrand Ides the lie; but, instead of that, he goes to bathe: "I wrapped myself up in my *touloupe*," (he says); and in a note, reader, you will find that *touloupe* means a sort of fur night-gown. Never did Homer enter into more minute details of the kitchen-furniture belonging to his heroes, than our *Abbé* does into those of every particular circumstance relative to his sweet person. Accompanied by his servant, he sets out for the bath—a most memorable event! the action will prove hot, as you shall see, reader: he hastens across a small anti-chamber, and opens the door of the bath—mistakes the vapour issuing from it for smoke—fear again lays hold of our hero—the notion of being suffocated terrifies him—he runs back faster than he came, giving the alarm of fire—the servant, ashamed of the manner in which
his

his master exposes himself, explains the matter to him, and persuades him to undress and go in, **which**, however, he was not willing to do, till a Russian set him the example, by going in with his cloaths on: at last, after infinite trouble, this ingenious naturalist was made to understand that this bath was intended for sweating. As soon as he got into it, with his usual giddiness he run up to the highest part to place his thermometer, while the heat affecting his head, his servant advised him to sit down, instead of which he fell down; then, not daring to stand upright, he attempted to dress himself again, but found his clothes too strait for him. I am rather puzzled to conceive how a night-gown, such as he described his *touloupe* to be, should have proved so difficult to get on. At his return home, his landlady fearing, from the condition he seemed to be in, an accident had befallen him, shewed some uneasiness; but he desired her to let him alone, for that he wanted to go to bed. Some time after, she returned to him with a basin of tea, which she pressed him to drink: he would not. The poor woman was however so kindly solicitous about it, that she at last got the better of the *Abbé's* ill-natured obstinacy, and he drank the tea. And here, good reader, you will find a most indecent print, which the *Abbé* intends should be supposed to resemble a Russian, but which in reality far more resembles a bacchanal. The *Abbé* has

has as great an aversion to these baths, as he has to Russia and its inhabitants: he mentions them in such a manner as must create an horror: he adds, "These baths are in use all over Russia: every inhabitant of this vast tract of land, from the sovereign down to the meanest subject, bathes twice a week, and in the same manner." This may be a mistake of *Monf. Charpe's*, but it has the look of a designed one: he insinuates, that this is a custom so general, it almost becomes a law. It is, however, a very uncommon thing in Russia to bathe thus, twice a week: there are numbers of Russians who never bathe at all, and greater numbers who use them two or three times a year: trades-people and workmen go into them once a week. You say that, "from the sovereign down to the meanest subject, they bathe twice a week, and in the same manner." And next to this you put a scandalous print about the process of bathing. How dare you, *Abbé*, carry your malice thus far! Upon my word this stroke alone calls for more than a correction. He goes on, page 54, "Every individual, even of the smallest fortune, has a private bath in his own house; in which the father, mother, and children, sometimes all bathe together." Had you said that there are baths, where the two sexes go, the one after the other, you would have come nearer to truth. At the public baths, there are different hours appointed
for

for the men, and for the women, or they are separated from each other by wooden partitions, as you say yourself. The *Abbé* adds, "that upon coming out of these baths quite naked, they throw themselves promiscuously into the water, or among the snow." *Promiscuously*, here, plainly means both sexes, and gives us to understand, that this is the custom of the whole nation: this is too grossly malicious and absurd to pass upon any body. He says, "The baths of the rich differ only from those of the poor people, by being more clean;" that is to say, that, set aside the cleanliness, the people of fashion go (as he has described the poor) into the bath without any distinction of sex. This is really enough to make me seriously angry, *Abbé*; never were calumny and scandal carried to such an impudent height. Are you the only person, *Mons. Chappe*, that has ever been in Russia? Could your malice in this particular so far outrun your prudence, as to make you forget, that it is impossible to know any thing of Russia without detecting the falsehood of this assertion? *Mons. d'Auteroche* did not blush when he wrote and published such infamous libels. I should, were I to let this particular instance of ill-nature take up any more of my time. The description of the manner of using these baths, is not a bit more to be depended on than the rest. He says, the custom is, to whip each other with a bundle of twigs,

to

to make the vapour penetrate into the pores. It is very likely that they may for sport have whipped the *Abbé* in the manner he mentions; and if they did, it was no more than he deserved: this is the more probable, as we shall find, in the sequel of his book, several instances of his having been made a jest of. The method of bathing varies: when the person finds a necessity of augmenting the heat, he has linen cloths shaken backwards and forwards over the place where he lies, and afterwards has his body rubbed with them: others make use of bundles of birch with the leaves on, in the same manner: but, as the *Abbé* is resolved to see every thing different from what it really is, he says they cause themselves to be whipped; and, as a proof of the truth of this assertion, he tells us a very simple story, about their having whipped him; and how, after having been twice flogged, he sprang up so suddenly, as to throw down stairs the man that was labouring at him: this was very like him; he would not for the world have missed so good an opportunity of paying the man for his trouble.

The *Abbé* will not even allow the Russians to be healthy, though all Europe is convinced there is not a more robust or indefatigable nation. He says, upon mentioning the utility of the baths, "All the Russians in general are much subject to the scurvy: the languid and inactive life they
E lead,

lead, being shut up in their stoves all winter, makes them very full of humours, and they perspire very little." The *Abbé* has an admirable talent for conclusions; but it now and then exposes him to some raps on the knuckles, as I fancy will be the case, if we examine this last. Pray, *Abbé*, what part of the nation is it you mean? Is it the common people? It is an undoubted truth, that there are none any where who do more work throughout the year: in summer they are always in the field; they plough, sow, make hay, cut corn, thresh it, and fell their wood: in winter they carry their provisions to town to sell; they hunt, or fish; and at night, when they have time, they sing and dance. The superior classes of the community lead pretty nearly the same life that luxury has introduced into every other part of Europe; so, *Abbé*, your assertion here falls to the ground.

After a dissertation of seven whole pages upon these baths, *Mons. Chappe* goes to take a view of the town of Solikamsk, and the brass-foundry, where the deputy director, being tired with the *Abbé's* questions, turned his back upon him; for which the *Abbé* revenges himself, by saying, "This man had a sensible and sprightly look, and seemed to want nothing but to have lived less among bears, and more among men." If this poor man had never been a bear-hunting, it must then be the Russians, his countrymen,
the

the *Abbé* means; and I have not the least doubt but that was his obliging idea. This requires no answer: such insults never reflect upon any but those who make them. The *Abbé* however tells us, that this deputy appeared to know very well what he was about, if any judgement could be formed from the good order and regularity in which the foundery was kept. So you see, reader, this poor man's only fault was, that he did not love to be interrupted in his work by absurd questions. This foundery gives the *Abbé* an opportunity of imparting to us a most judicious reflexion he has been at the pains to make; which is, that during the whole course of his journey he has observed, that it is always more useful to have letters of recommendation when one travels, than to travel without them: and immediately after this wise remark, the *Abbé* expresses his surprise, that throughout all Russia the servants obey their masters: he is even displeased at it, and to give them evident marks of his indignation, he calls them slaves, and their masters, despotic, ignorant, and distrustful. Bravo! *Abbé*, don't shrink from what you have begun; your book would not have made half the figure it does, were the epithets and abuse taken out of it.

After having vented his spleen upon the brass-foundery, he mentions a manufactory of brass which he does not like, because his troublesome questions meet with the same reception as in the

foundery. He then gives an account of the salt springs. He says, "There are salt springs in abundance in this town, they say upwards of sixty : notwithstanding this great number of springs, there are not more than two pans (or boilers) in use." *Mons. L'Abbé*, every province in Russia has its salt from the salt spring that is nearest it ; so that, if there were at that time only two boilers at Solikamsk, I suppose it was because they wanted no more. And here in a note the *Abbé* victoriously calls Isbrand Ides to account for having advanced, that the boilers are ten *toises* deep ; and adds, "There is no river at Solikamsk capable of bearing a vessel of the burden of one thousand tons ; and it is impossible that a crew of eight hundred men should have been employed to carry and take care of the salt." You had better have let Isbrand Ides alone, *Abbé* ; for he is in the right, not you, on this occasion : his only mistake has been, not mentioning the time of year that these ships sail. It is in spring alone that the river Kama is navigable down to the place where the Wialka falls into it, because the water is then at the highest ; and they then hasten to send down those vessels loaded with iron, brass, provisions, and salt. There are some of them really so large as to have crews of eight hundred men : those vessels are no more than very large boats, in Russian called *ladii* ; they sail down the Kama, and up
the

the Wolga as far as Kasan and Niznei Nowgorod, where they unload into smaller boats, called *strougas*, which, however, have generally two hundred men on board : one ladia generally fills four of these *strougas*, and these sail up the Wolga to Yaraslow, where in their turn they fill six common boats, and sometimes more ; and these last go to Petersburg. The ladii and *strougas* sometimes go down the Wolga to Astracan, but they never get up higher than the place which I have here mentioned.

After a long and curious description of boiling the salt, the *Abbé* leaves Solikamsk the 2d of April, and passes the mountains, which he does not like in the least better than the roads : he is afraid of being swallowed up in the snow ; a thing never thought of, nor heard of, in Russia : but our *Abbé's* intrepidity foresees dangers : when it is cold, he fears the frost ; when the weather is milder, the idea of a thaw makes him tremble. The *Abbé*, thus tossed from the terror of cold to the fear of heat, casts a gloomy eye upon the fir trees he meets with on his road, and says, " Those of the greatest height seemed to bend under the weight of the snow." A little farther he says, " Nature seemed to have become quite torpid." How true this may be, you will judge, good reader, when I tell you that I do not suppose there is a country, to which nature has been more bountiful than to Siberia : it quite

resembles the fairy lands: the Russians give it the nick-name of *Sibir Solotoie dno*, i. e. Golden-foiled Siberia: it has mountains of crystal, rocks of jasper, hills of agate, and of all sorts of marbles, intermixed with veins of gold, silver, brass, and iron; and all this in the country where, according to the *Abbé*, "nature seems torpid." Corn is there amazingly plentiful: there are spots of ground that bring forth the seed sixty times, many that produce thirty, and none less than seven. Notwithstanding this, our *Abbé* says, "That these seeds seldom come to perfect maturity." Siberia supplies itself with every necessary of life, distills brandy, and, besides this, furnishes the adjacent provinces with corn. The Tartars, who border upon the southern limits of Siberia, come to the fortresses on the frontiers to be provided with it; so that we can only here acquit the *Abbé*, by applying to him a line of one of our English poets:

"All seems yellow to the jaundiced eye."

He continues, "The inhabitants are shut up in their cottages nine months of the year, hardly ever stirring out as long as the winter lasts." There is hardly a set of people that love moving about better than the Siberians; they have a natural curiosity, that always prompts them with a desire of making new discoveries. Government has taken pains to encourage this inclination,
and

and to it Russia is indebted for the wide extent of territory she possesses, from the river Irtysh to the Kourile islands: most of these conquests have been made in winter. This is a pretty plain proof that the *Abbé*, as usual, does not know what he is saying, when he shuts them up like mole-crickets in their holes for nine months in the year. Snows, wind, and ice, have as yet been no hindrance to the enterprising spirit of the Russians: they are accustomed from their infancy to get the better of difficulties, whether produced by the climate, or by the common occurrences of life: this may be beyond some people's conception, but it is nevertheless true.

After some more shocks and overturns, our *Abbé* gets to Rostefs, where no horses were to be had; and as fate has ordained, that we are to be made acquainted with all the *Abbé's* difficulties, you will here learn, gentle reader, how slowly, with the horses he had, he crept up the mountain, which was not high. He immediately takes the level of it, and finds it much higher than the sea at Brest—he continues his road, and gets to a village—he leaves it again and passes a river, where he hears a story of a woman devoured by a bear, which accident, however, he says, seldom happens—a description of the bear-hunting—he admires the white bears—mentions their fierceness—says, that a man armed only with

a single spear, goes out to hunt these animals, and kills them: and he adds, "This requires a great share of intrepidity." Does it so, *Mons. L'Abbé*? You did not appear to have so high an opinion of the Russian intrepidity in the beginning of your book: "This timid set of people," I remember, were your words. I am pleased to see you recant; though very possibly you mean to advance, that it is only those who hunt the white bear, that are blessed with this valuable qualification, you so often find the want of. Let it be as it will, it remains either a contradiction, or an absurdity; nor will I venture to take the decision upon myself. The *Abbé* deals so much in both, it is difficult to say which of the two he honours with the greatest partiality.

Mons. Coappe reaches Melechina: he goes into the house of a peasant, and gives us (what he intends should pass for) an exact description of the peasant, his wife, and an old woman who had fallen asleep as she was rocking a child. The reader is by this time enough acquainted with the *Abbé's* intention, when he sets about making a description, to know it never is but with a design of setting things forth in an odious light: he gives himself that trouble upon this occasion; and, for fear the picture should not appear sufficiently striking from his colouring, it is accompanied by a print, where our hero is so represented, that one is rather at a loss

to find out from his look, whether he is come to pillage the cottage, or to ask for a night's lodging. A young woman almost naked is next to him ; and two children entirely so, who appear to be dead, are extended at his feet. The *Abbé* tells us how children suck in Russia: for my own part, I believe it is in the same manner they do every where else. He talks of swaddling-clothes, and for a wonder allows, that children walk sooner, and are less subject to deformity, in Russia, than in any other part of Europe: fearing, however, lest this might be thought too great a partiality shown to the Russians, he takes care to add this reflexion: "*As by this kind of management the Russians are not subject to so many infirmities, they would live longer than any other set of men, if they were not so much addicted to debauchery, and excesses of all kinds.*" I do maintain, *Abbé*, that debauchery is not more common in Russia than elsewhere: the natives indeed are more robust ; and consequently what would be an excess for you, may be none for them.

Monf. d'Auterocbe says, speaking of the Russians, " Their whole life, and all their exercises, are productive of a strength of constitution, which enables them to bear the greatest fatigues in war time, without injury to their health " This truth has escaped the *Abbé* unguardedly: he hastens to add, " What advantages might we not then expect,
if

if the Russian method of educating was adopted by a nation, where the nature of the government, and the moral principles instilled into young minds, direct them equally to what is honourable, glorious, and resolute?" There is no doubt but that the *Abbé*, by this speech, means his own countrymen, whom he never knows how to praise but at the expence of others. A little digression may here not be improper. I should be glad the *Abbé* would answer me this one question honestly, Which of the two nations can be considered to have most in view the direction of youth towards honour, glory, and courage? Is it that, where the sovereign, having carefully collected the principles and rules that seem to tend most to the happiness of the generality; having corrected and amended them herself, gives them to her subjects, saying, "These are the principles that seem calculated to secure your happiness; could I have found better, I should have chosen them for you:—form from these a system of laws to your own minds, and bring it to me, that we may consult together what will prove most beneficial:—these principles are the admiration of all Europe in general, and of sensible people in particular:—it is true the number of these is not great"—(don't forget my question, *Abbé*)—Is it the nation I have just been describing? or is it that which has prohibited the importation of this admirable code of laws, probably for
fear

fear the eyes of the subjects should be opened, and the superiority of our constitution compared with theirs?*

The instructions of our gracious Empress for forming the new code, have in sight, from beginning to end, the direction of youth towards honour, glory, and courage. *Mons. L'Abbé*, these instructions are looked upon as laws with us, and are forbid in France. Take care, *Abbé*; you will soon find yourself possessed only of the shadow, while we possess the substance.

The *Abbé* says, "It must be owned however, that prejudices, with regard to the method of bringing up children, are not so prevalent at Paris, as they were some little time ago: some people begin to leave off swaddling-clothes; others accustom their children to go quite naked." Pray, reader, observe: a little while ago the *Abbé* abused the Russians exceedingly for letting their children run about almost naked; and now he tells us, that they are getting the better of prejudices at Paris, and beginning to let the children run about almost naked there, which he approves of as a proper part of education: this is pretty well, as to partiality. The *Abbé* then criticises the custom of obliging children always to make use of their right hand, in preference to the left. He observes, that the education of the great differs from that of the common people. This is a happy discovery; I wish you joy of it,

Abbé.

* The Empress's code of laws was forbid at Paris.

60 REMARKS UPON

Abbé. Mentioning the number of children that die, he expresses himself thus: "There are various causes perpetually combining for the depopulation of the several hamlets scattered about these immense deserts." Let us understand each other, *Abbé*. When you talk of immense deserts, what do you mean? Is it all Russia you give this appellation to? If so, you are greatly mistaken: Russia is, according to the vulgar phrase, as full of inhabitants as an egg is full of meat. The provinces of Moscow and Niznei Nowgorod, as well as many others, fall short of land in proportion to their inhabitants. More ground is necessary for a labourer in Russia, than any where else, because the winters are long; and during this season they are obliged to feed their cattle in their house: besides, a great quantity of wood is required to warm a Russian peasant's house. I am persuaded *Mons. Chappe* has not so good a fire in his house at Paris, as the poorest of our peasants has in Russia. The northern part of Siberia is not so full of inhabitants: the southern part is growing populous; we shall mention in what manner hereafter. To judge by the *Abbé's* way of speaking, page 68, one would imagine all Russia was an hospital: and he adds, "The only remedy they have, consists in their stoves." This is the name he is pleased to give to the baths. This last stroke is a clear proof, *Abbé*, of your ignorance, as to what regards our inhabitants.

inhabitants. All our peasants understand botany in some degree ; they make numberless medicines of herbs : I don't pretend to say, infallible ones ; but such as they are, they may generally be reckoned less hurtful to the constitution than those nostrums that your empirics puff about to the detriment of mankind. The *Abbé* says, that the manner in which the common people live in Russia, promotes and encourages debauchery ; for that a whole family, father, mother, children, &c. live in the same room. I do not well know how to comprehend, that a child being constantly under a parent's eye, is a means of promoting debauchery. I know you say, " they sleep together promiscuously upon benches and stoves : " but this is a mistake ; the meanest cottage in Russia never fails of having a separate apartment for married people.

The *Abbé's* intention of leaving Melechina, gives him an opportunity of saying, " These inhabitants, shut up in their rooms the greatest part of the year, have no communication with the external air, except by windows of a foot square, always shut, and by a small valve which they open for some time in the morning to let out the smoak ; so that they live constantly in infected vapours, which have been collecting and fermenting together near nine months in the year." *Monf. L'Abbé*, it is generally allowed, nothing purifies the air of a room more than a chimney :
that

that there is not a cottage without one, is an undoubted fact; and you yourself say, the valve is opened every morning to let out the smoak. From this it seems pretty plain the air is refreshed every day. How then can you talk of collected and fermented vapours? If you would take a little tour into Westphalia, *Abbé*, the peasants habitations there would afford you much finer perfumes than ours can do.

Upon leaving Melechina, the *Abbé* finds himself in a plain, where the snow melts away suddenly: the thermometer, however, remains at seven degrees below 0. He passes a hamlet, and gets to Verchotourie. He says, "This is a small town in Siberia, not far from the river Toura; it is situated on rocks, and surrounded with some trifling fortifications, which have been built by the Russians since they were in possession of Siberia." *Mons. L'Abbé*, were the fortifications in Siberia made like those in Flanders, it would be an unnecessary expence to the state, because, such as they are, they suffice for what is required of them. Your expression of "trifling" therefore only proves your desire of finding fault—though it is possible you knew no better. The *Abbé* adds, "The only way of passing from Russia into Siberia, was through this town:" and he accounts for it, by Gagarin's having shut up the other when he wanted to become sovereign of Siberia. This is not the present real reason, *Abbé*: the only

A JOURNEY TO SIBERIA. 63

only one for shutting up all the other passages, was to prevent the custom-house being defrauded. But as soon as the empress Elizabeth had abolished the inland customs, all the roads into Siberia were again open and free; so that the *Abbé's* application to the great chancellor, for an order to prevent the custom-house officers from searching his instruments, was a very useless piece of ceremony. As to what the *Abbé* says of prince Gagarin, governor of Siberia, having formed the plan of making himself master of this province, it has never been proved: and as far as I can remember, this prince was not punished for this project, of which there are no proofs, but for the depredations and tyranny he had been guilty of, and which are mentioned in his sentence. Our learned *Abbé* continues, page 69, "Peter the First had given a general order, that all instruments relative to arts and sciences should be suffered to pass unsearched: this indulgence I could not avoid taking notice of here, as it does so much honour to that monarch: but his successors found themselves obliged to repeal the order, on account of the abuses that were soon practised under that pretence." The *Abbé* is mistaken: nothing relative to arts and sciences ever paid duty in Russia; but they were never exempt from being searched, because that would have given too frequent opportunities of smuggling goods under the specious name of arts and sciences.

sciences. Notwithstanding what I have said about the inland duties being abolished, the *Abbé* contrives to fish out a man, whom he calls the director of the custom-house at Verchotourie: whom he can have mistaken for such, I cannot discover, unless it was the man who had that office before the late Empress suppressed it. Our hero offers this pretended director of the customs some burgundy, and says, "There is no wine in Siberia, but what is brought in by travellers." Had he said, there is no wine besides that of the church, but what the individuals, and some merchants import, he had not been so far wrong.

The *Abbé* leaves Verchotourie—the darkness of the night obliges him to light his flambeaux—he travels all night without any accident—the next day, however, a sad disaster happens—the watch-maker's sledge breaks—it is mended with cords—they reach a hamlet, where the *Abbé* takes the trouble of going to see his postilions dine, merely for the sake of abusing their dinner. You may be sure, reader, they were eating *sour kroust*, i.e. four cabbage and oatmeal. He says they dress it with fish-oil, hempseed-oil, or bears-grease. He is jesting, I fancy: such a thing was never heard of in Russia; fish-oil and hempseed-oil are used for nothing but lamps, and bears-grease as an external remedy. The inhabitants indeed of Kamtschatka eat every thing. The *Abbé* does
not

not love black bread; he says it is not eatable. Very likely it might not please his palate; but our black bread is reckoned remarkably good. Do you imagine, *Abbé*, that your onion-soup, which all travellers who pass through France are regaled with, is preferable to, and more nourishing than, cabbage-soup and black bread; that famous onion-soup, in general composed of some spoonfulls of water and a fresh onion? *Mons. Chappe* continues: "They take great care not to leave the least remains of victuals on the table; but gather up the crumbs very scrupulously, and eat them: the table after dinner is the only clean piece of furniture in the house." *Mons. d'Auterache*, you judge the whole nation from the actions of your postilion: because he picked up a crumb from the table, and ate it while you was looking at him, you pronounce the whole nation crumb-eaters: believe me, victuals are too easily come at in Russia, for the natives to trouble their heads about crumbs. You say, "the table after dinner is the only clean piece of furniture in their house:" and this too, from your postilion's having picked up the crumbs. *Abbé*, a countryman of mine once travelled in France, and saw a beggar clothed in rags: would it not have been following your method, had he pronounced that to be the French fashion?

The *Abbé* says, "There were four or five women in this house, who hid themselves behind

a kind of curtain when we came in; but they soon grew more familiar." If the women hid themselves when the *Abbé* came in, it was, probably, because his looks frightened them; but if they did not look upon him as a wild beast, and only retired at his approach, "hid themselves" is an exaggeration, and only meant to give them the appearance of savages. The sequel of the paragraph will prove this to be his intention: he says, "They soon grew more familiar:" though this may, probably, be a pretty mode of speech he has adopted. We are now to attend him to his *toilette*: "The excessive heat obliged him to throw off his touloupe, (it is not very surprising he found the heat excessive, when he kept on his fur night-gown in a warm room) and then put on his French great coat." He adds, "The women admired it much, and surveyed with the greatest curiosity every part of my dress, which appeared quite new to them, although this was the only road in use." Indeed, *Abbé*, it is impossible these women should have expressed such admiration at your old great coat. Why, there is not a man-servant in Russia who does not wear the like. You tell us you was going the high road, where a number of people pass and repass; the trades-people belonging to the fair at Irbit, the caravans from China, the governors of the provinces, the woyevodes, and all the military. Well, *Abbé*, all these people dress exactly like the rest
of

of Europe; and surely the women you mention had seen them often enough, not to die with pleasure at the sight of your great-coat, any more than the other particulars of your dress. The *Abbé* thinks the women here very lively, and the girls very pretty: he makes a few observations upon their shifts and their ruffles; and then, after having mentioned forests, plains, and hamlets, more or less inhabited, he returns to the Siberian women, and describes their head-dress before and after marriage.

The *Abbé* never is so happy as when he can expatiate upon trifles: but he has forgot to say, or very likely he did not observe, that the habitations of the different colonies which people Siberia, are so mixed, and that every one having kept to their own mode of dressing, and only borrowed some little ornaments from their neighbours, there is no possibility of determining which really is the dress of the country.

He leaves this place, and arrives the 7th at noon at the hamlet called Babikhina. "The thaw was so complete, the snow was melted every where, except on the beaten tract." He is afraid of passing the rivers—he gets to Tumen—page 73, he wants to leave it again—he is told, "that crossing the river is very dangerous, as the ice is every moment expected to break up." The *Abbé* persists in his resolution of crossing—he makes his postilions drunk, and then promises to pay them

double if they will venture—he prevails, and gets over safe—he passes several hamlets, and reaches Vaksarina, where he is to pass the river Tobol—here he begins to fear the danger of crossing it—a violent agitation seizes the *Abbé's* mind—he determines to make his observations upon this spot—a moment after he thinks he should do better to go on to Tobolsk; and as this indecision puts him out of humour, he, as usual, vents his spleen upon the natives. Page 74, he says, “ I began to be sufficiently acquainted with the people, to know that the civilities I had received upon the road, were owing to my meeting with a few good people, and chiefly to the letters of recommendation I had from Mr. de Worontzow: on all occasions, where the inhabitants had been left to themselves, I had met with the greatest difficulties; and in this instance I had also much to fear from the superstition of ignorant people.” Pray observe, good reader, that what our academician here says, is, from one end to the other, a mere supposition. At his setting out from Petersburg, he determined to bring his attendants into proper subordination: it was for this purpose he buffeted his guide—his quarrels with his watch-maker are endless—he speaks to his suite with a tone of authority, and in general you will never find him forget his consequence a moment. Well, notwithstanding all these proofs of his good-nature,

nature, what were "these great difficulties," that were to be attributed entirely to the ill-will of the natives?

I do not find his book offers any one instance of reason for these complaints: he found the roads spoiled by the weather; and at Solikamsk a deputy director, who did not love impertinent questions, turned his back upon him; and this is all that I can find. In general I do advance, (and all those that have travelled in Russia, and pay a regard to truth, will confirm it) that there is not a more hospitable nation than the Russian: if a traveller will but submit to make the least show of good nature to a Russian peasant, his house and table are at his service; and this they look upon as so great a trifle, that they are astonished when he desires to know what he is to pay for it. But if the peasants observe, that the traveller thinks he has a right to all that they can give, and that he chuses to display a sweetness of manners like our hero's, their doors are then locked up, and they will give nothing: this is pretty much the same in the towns, as among the peasants; and I own I cannot but approve of this manner of acting, and think the *Abbé* very wrong to complain. He cannot, however, help allowing he did meet with "a few good people" on one hand, and "Mr. de Worontzow's letters made him meet with civility" on the other: so that, upon the whole, the

complaints seem to be about what *might have* happened, not what really *did*.

Mons. Chappe finishes the paragraph I have been commenting on, by saying, "I had also much to fear from the superstitions of this ignorant people." It is true, *Abbé*, that no country contains a greater variety of sects than Russia in general: you will see Mahometans and idolaters in the midst of the habitations of the Greeks, which, though it be the established church, persecutes neither Jews, Papists, Lutherans, Calvinists, nor Herrenbutters: every one enjoys the liberty of following his own mode of worship. There is, without doubt, a great deal of superstition, as well as of ignorance, in this diversity of opinions: but we possess a great virtue in Russia, which you are totally unacquainted with; that is, toleration: this teaches us to look upon all men as our brothers; and we daily find the necessity of putting this virtue in practice, which you do not chuse to be acquainted with, because it will not fill your pockets. In the 74th page our *Abbé* is twenty-five leagues distant from Tobolsk—he is afraid of missing his observation—this idea throws him into a cold sweat, which is followed by an universal dejection, and despair at last: the end of all this is a proposal he makes to his people to lay boards and branches of trees over the ice, which was expected to break up every moment; but, as his people had no desire of being drowned,

the

the *Abbé* says, "They were so obstinate that they found all my proposals impracticable, and peremptorily refused undertaking them." I take this for a most convincing proof of the *Abbé's* imperious conduct towards them: as good words never fail of effect with the Russians, it certainly was not the danger that terrified them; for they will cross the rivers, for diversion, at the moment they are breaking up. All the travellers, that have been at Petersburg at this time of the year, can confirm the truth of this. In all dangers the common people have no other word in their mouth than *nebos, don't fear*.

The ensuing paragraph shows the *Abbé's* goodness: "Their refusal made such an impression on me, that I was inclined to force them to go on with me." *Mons. Chappe* makes very little of risking men's lives: his own danger was infinitely less than theirs, because his sledge was in some measure a safety to him: however, as he was alone against so great a number, he was so good as to desist from his intention of forcing them. He buys horses, and then once more changes his resolution, and "calls for some supper, and brandy to give to his people." What follows proves how harshly he had used them; for he says, "It was necessary, after what had passed, to bring my people into good humour again." Who would not be out of humour, I wonder, with a man, whose ruling principle is

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brutality?

brutality? While he is distributing his brandy he calls for his thermometer, and places it against the wall, and says, "The people were as much surprised at this instrument, as the inhabitants of Kuzmodemiansk had been at the barometer, which they took for a clock." It is possible it might be the first time a thing of this kind was seen in this village. I shall only observe, as I go, that the professors belonging to the second expedition to Kamtschatka had left barometers and thermometers in different places on their road, with a charge to the inhabitants to make the observations. At their return they found their orders had been fulfilled, without any of the people having attached an idea of the marvellous to these things. This shows they were not quite so new in Siberia as *Mons. Chappe* represents them; nor were those in his possession the first that had been seen.

He continues, "The thermometer presently rose to twenty-five degrees: I then took hold of it, and very confidently told them, that by carrying it out of doors, it would show us whether there was any danger in crossing the river; and that, if there was not, it would fall down to a certain mark which I pointed out to them. They directly fixed the thermometer out of doors; I came in immediately, and spoke no more about going away: I soon perceived that ignorance and superstition were at work in their minds." This whole

whole paragraph, even admitting the *Abbé's* supposition, "of the people's attaching an idea of the marvellous to the thermometer," gives him the appearance of a most decided mountebank; and if he was mistaken in the kind of curiosity they shewed, there is no trusting to the good gentleman's judgment: in either light, the character he appears in, is by no means a great one. He says, "I was employed in making them drink, when the most stubborn fellow among them, who had slipped out without my notice, came in again, and told me with impatient earnestness, that the animal had got down below the mark." The *Abbé* really imagines, the quick-silver of his thermometer was taken for an animal: this is a fresh proof of his ignorance. The word *zwerok*, which is undoubtedly the word they made use of to him, is a term they use ludicrously for any thing they do not comprehend, or that has the least resemblance of a living creature. The *Abbé* chose to take it in the literal sense, and not to allow any thing for the mirth of the postilion, who, thanks to the pains the *Abbé* had taken, was half drunk; and who, upon seeing the quick-silver go up and down in that manner, merrily told them, the *zwerok* had got down. Every nation has its own idioms and modes of speech, which are neither to be understood literally, nor to be thought absurd, though both are excusable when one knows no better.

Our

Our *Abbé* leaves this hamlet, and gets to the borders of the river Tobol. Page 76, he says, "The first postilion was preparing to cross it, and stopped short: I stood upright in my sledge, and called out to him, *stoupai* (go on); pushing at the same time my own postilion so violently, that he went on immediately, and we were on the other side of the river in an instant." We must imagine the *Abbé* exceedingly delighted with his own courage every time he takes upon himself to beat his domestics: he never fails to impart the mighty feat to his reader. Immediately upon this he gives us a sketch of his own character in the following words: "I did not, however, enjoy the happiness of this moment, as I should have done: I had but just crossed the river, when I was seized with an universal tremor, accompanied with convulsive starts: my strength, which seemed to have increased the nearer I came to this instant, now forsook me all at once." What did this intrepid warrior, this boxing hero, do? Guess. He had recourse to some remains of *cordials* he found in his sledge, and they revived him. He goes through Cheskatowa and Dektereva, passes the river Irtysh, and arrives at Tobolsk the 10th of April, "after having travelled about eight hundred leagues, or three thousand one hundred and eighteen werstes, from St. Petersburg, in a month." He goes to see Mr. de Soimonow, then governor of Siberia, who sends for his daughters:

daughters : they salute the *Abbé*, and put him out of countenance, poor man ! He takes this opportunity of giving us a description of the true *etiquette*. In this particular, he says he failed in it, because he “ ought to have staid in his place till they came up to salute him.” There is one trifling error in the account of this established *etiquette*, as *Monf. Chappe* is pleased to call it ; which is, that it does not exist : every Russian lives in the manner most agreeable to himself in his own family, and receives his friends or foreigners in the way he likes best. I do not suppose there are two families in Russia that behave in the same manner to strangers.

The *Abbé* keeps himself busy from the day of his arrival, till the 11th of May, with the construction of his observatory. Page 79, he tells us, that the inhabitants of Tobolsk, on account of his astronomical observations, took him for a magician : he was, however, not the first person that ever made astronomical observations in Siberia ; the persons engaged in two expeditions to Kamtschatka, had made theirs at different times. He adds, “ The least ignorant among them reported a number of absurdities about this observation, and others expected at that instant the end of the world.” *Monf. L'Abbé*, if the old women at Tobolsk had this way of thinking, they possessed it in common with those at Paris, and many other places, where comets and other
phenomena

phænomena have terrified people out of their senses. Your queens for many centuries could not be brought to bed without an astrologer being placed in the wardrobe to foretell the good or ill fortune of the new-born child. In the beginning of the present age, did not Paris offer us the shocking story of *La Brinvillier*, in which so many people of the first quality were indicted for witchcraft, others for poison, charms, &c. and were burnt? After that it does not quite become you, *Abbé*, to make a great fuss about the notion the mob at Tobolsk had of you. I'll answer for it, had they known you, they would never have suspected you to be a conjurer. He says, "They looked upon me as having occasioned the overflowing of the river Irtysh." This overflowing however happens every year, as the *Abbé* but a few pages before observed himself. Some Russians "advised him not to go alone to the observatory, and to take some precautions against the fury of the mob." They were making a joke of him when they put this into his head. Mr. Soimonow, Count Pouschkin, and the archbishop of Tobolsk, had a mind to observe the transit: the *Abbé* had a tent pitched for them, in which he placed a telescope for them and their families.

To all this follows a minute account of all the *Abbé's* feelings when he saw the weather was favourable for his observation, and his distress

at

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at the sight of fogs and clouds : this fills two pages and a half : finally, he sees Venus and the sun. “ At this moment, (says he) I truly enjoyed the pleasure of my observation, and was delighted with the hopes of its being useful to posterity, after my quitting this life.” And with this modest hope he closes his observation upon the transit of Venus ; but, alas ! not his *book*.

*Of the CLIMATE of SIBERIA, and the other Provinces of RUSSIA.**

E X A M I N A T I O N.

M*ons. L'Abbé Chappe* tells us, “ The breadth of this latter part (of Russia) from Azoph to its boundaries in the Frozen Ocean, is five hundred and twenty-five leagues.” He reckons Azoph among the possessions of Russia in 1768, when his book was published. This is a great mistake ; Azoph and Tangarod were razed, and declared the barrier ground between the empire of Russia and the Turks, at the peace of Belgrade, concluded in the year 1739 ; and this ground did not belong to either state, till the present war was declared in 1769, when the Russian troops

* As it is the translation of this *Antidote* I have undertaken, and not a regular refutation of the English translation of *Mons. Chappe's* book, I am obliged to go on with the remarks according to the original, the translator having altered the Contents, and abridged several parts of the work.

troops took possession of Azoph the 6th of March, and of Tangarod the 6th of April; and the demolished fortifications were immediately restored. A few lines farther, he says, "I was told, in passing through Solikamsk, that in the year 1761, Mr. de L'Isle's thermometer had sunk down to two hundred and eighty degrees." An undoubted proof of what I before advanced, that the *Abbé's* barometers and thermometers were not so new in Siberia as he would gladly have it thought. Here the *Abbé* exclaims at the "incredible cold: (he says) I did not conceive it was possible a man could live in this degree of cold: I had often feared not being able to support it, though *Monf. de Reaumur's* thermometer fell only to about twenty-two degrees." As other men kept alive about him, our *Abbé* need not have despaired of living also.

And in this place, reader, you will learn, that *Monf. Chappe* had shaved himself but once since Moscow, and that it is the town of Niznei Nowgorod whose annals are to contain this remarkable event: he says, "his breath was then used to freeze about his lips, and to make one entire circle with his beard." This is not possible: at most his beard may have been a little whitened with the frost; and he had that in common with all the *iswofchick*, or waggoners, who wear beards. Why did he let his beard grow, I wonder? was it by cleanliness, laziness, or to make physical experiments upon

upon it? There is no conjecturing. His lamentations about the cold are without end. He says, "The rest of my body indeed was guarded by the quantity of furs I was covered with: besides that, the very snow which fell would sometimes defend me, as it lay five or six inches deep about my sledge; yet the air I breathed, pressed with such force upon my breast, which had never been affected before, that I was like to sink under the acuteness of the continual pain." Don't you think with me, reader, it is the *Abbé's* imagination which was cold in this passage, because they told him the thermometer at Solikamsk indicated an intense cold? According to his own words, he only saw and felt twenty-two degrees: allowing this, and supposing him dressed up as he represents himself, and his sledge covered with five or six inches of snow, he must have been almost stewed to death, and could not possibly feel the cold, he utters such dreadful complaints against. Another observation, not improper to be made in this place, is, that when the snow falls, the cold is less severe; so that when there were six inches of snow upon our hero's sledge, it is most probable, he was less cold than before it snowed. At the end of all this he repeats what was told him merely to laugh at his credulity: "That the cold sometimes increases so considerably in a few hours, as to strike dead both men and horses, which happened to be at too great a distance

distance from any house to be speedily sheltered." This is a strange tale, fit only to frighten children. I never heard of such a thing as a horse frozen to death, and rarely of men; none but drunkards, and others that sleep in the streets, run any risk. In the great colds, attended with high winds, it now and then happens that an uncovered part of the face will be frozen; but rubbing it with snow or ice, immediately brings it to its former state.

Here we find a description of the soil about Tobolsk, which the *Abbé* says is fit for agriculture, but greatly neglected, as much from the laziness of the inhabitants, as from some physical causes; among which he repeats the small quantity of corn which is sown, and seldom comes to any perfection. I have already answered and proved the falsity of this assertion. To judge from the *Abbé's* words, one would imagine that all Siberia was overflowed in spring, and that one might sail over the tops of the mountains. When you come to examine the matter, what do you find it reduced to? Why, that the Irtysh extends itself some hundred *toises* beyond its usual limits. The *Abbé's* description of this is pompous enough to give one the idea of a new ocean. *Monf. L'Abbé*, the Irtysh is a very large and fine river; but it had no title to expect the honour you confer upon it, when you call it "a new sea, formed in the midst of the continent." At the

the end of this, reader, you will find that in Siberia the vapours that have formed clouds, fall down again in rain, snow or mists; I fancy it is pretty much the same in France. He adds, "These mists are the more dangerous, as they are always driven by impetuous winds, and therefore occasion more acute pains than are felt from a much greater degree of cold." *Monf. Chappe*, when the winds are impetuous there are no fogs; and when there are fogs, there are no winds. It stands to reason, that they are incompatible: never was there such a thing heard of as a mist in a high wind; the wind always disperses the fog.

Here follows a narrative, which will teach you, reader, in case you do not know it, that the sun hardly ever quits the horizon of Siberia in spring, and that the vegetables shoot up in a short time. And then comes a fresh instance of the *Abbé's* ill will to the fir-trees, which appear to him as old as the earth that bears them: he says, that "their form, which is ever the same, and the gloominess of their colour, saddens the most chearful disposition." *Monf. L'Abbé*, when, among all the trees Siberia produces, you only name the firs, and that you make them gloomy and dismal, is it they that are likely to make people splenetic? or is it you, that are giving a bad turn to every thing? You go on: "In these solitary woods the only

persons to be met with, are some of the unfortunate inhabitants, in search of birch-trees, into which they make an incision to get out the sap, with which their mead is afterwards made." Just before, he said, "Nothing was to be seen in these desert plains except fir-trees." Now we find he mentions *birch-trees* also; and I should mention a great many more, were I to give a list of all the trees Siberia produces. What then, *Abbé*, could induce you to say, it produces *only* firs? was it that you might add that emphatic speech, "Their form which is ever the same, &c.?" You have already taught us, *Abbé*, not to believe things gloomy, because you represent them so: your imagination has often shewed you things black, which, in reality, had no resemblance of that colour. Do you recollect, when you fancied your people had abandoned you in the midst of the snows, how much you found yourself mistaken? You have not that peculiar happiness in your suppositions, which one would expect from the frequency of them. Give me leave to ask farther explanations of the above-mentioned passages, which I frankly own are beyond my poor comprehension. You said, "Nothing is to be seen in these *desert plains*, except, &c." and immediately after, "in these solitary *woods* the only persons, &c." The word *plain*, as I understand it, means an open country; but I here find, that by *plain*, you mean a *wood of firs*.

firs: according to my idea, the one excludes the other: decide for me, *Abbé*: I own I am at a loss, and do not know how to reconcile these "*desert plains*" and "*solitary woods*, where the only persons to be met with are some of the unfortunate inhabitants." By the bye, *Abbé*, if these plainy woods, or woody plains, are deserts as you say, where do the inhabitants come from? or, if they are inhabited, why call them deserts? And why, again, "*unfortunate*?" *Abbé*, they are not loaded with taxes; they pay their two roubles and seventy pence either in money or furs, as best suits them. They cannot complain of want of clothing, because they are clothed in the warmest manner; and I dare answer for it, not one would have changed his clothing for the *Abbé's* great-coat, which (he says) threw the women into such extasy.

Eatables are both plentiful and cheap in Siberia: fish is excellent, meat in abundance, game in proportion, no restraints upon hunting and fishing: salt comes to a mere *trifle*: they have women and children to their hearts desire; the idolaters among them have as many wives as they can maintain: no pestilential disorders, no wars; they live to an advanced age; and illnesses are with them less frequent than in any other part of the globe. Why then do you call them "*unfortunate inhabitants*?" Give your reason, *Abbé*; for I assure you neither they, nor I, can guess it. I shall make no remarks upon the mead that

the *Abbé* says they make of the sap of birch-trees. I know that in spring they do extract the sap that he talks of, and they make a draught of it, which both sweetens and refreshes the blood, and is far preferable to all the decoctions an apothecary's shop can afford.

The *Abbé* takes a walk along the banks of the river *Irtisch*: he says, "I was in hopes of seeing landscapes embellished with a multitude of houses." In the very place where the river overflows, reader! sensible and clever! was it not? He might with as much propriety have looked for the sun at midnight. Here follows another interesting passage: he expresses himself thus: "Spurred on by the desire of getting some birds I was unacquainted with, I ventured to stop a few minutes on the same spot, but being too intent upon my object, did not perceive the ground had given way, till after I had shot one of the birds; I then attempted to fetch it, but found myself stuck so fast, as not to be able to stir." I shall make no observations upon the *Abbé's* experiment, though his surprise at sinking and sticking in the ground that is constantly covered with water, would afford matter for speculation. Pray, *Abbé*, was it a duck with a serpent's head you killed? The gentle reader, accustomed to learn from *Mons. Chappede's* own pen every little *trifle* that regards him, will not be sorry to know the following anecdote, which he

has

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has not mentioned in any one part of his book; whether from forgetfulness, or what other reason, I will not pretend to determine; but I am very glad to have it in my power to make up for this neglect. Count Pouschkin had a baker at Tobolsk, originally a Frenchman, who as such soon got acquainted with *Monf. Chappe*, and was employed by him to get several curious pieces of natural history: among the rest he promised him ducks with serpents heads, and prevailed upon our *Abbé* to buy *tarakans* (a sort of cock-chafers) at ten-pence a piece, assuring him that in spring these creatures sung like thrushes, and that they were venomous. The credulous academician filled a large box with these curiosities, to the no small diversion of the baker.

The *Abbé* returns to his boat, and goes up the river Irtysh to a village situated on pretty high ground: he says, "Every thing in this village bespoke the utmost misery." So he has said fifty times before, and with just as little truth as now. After having said, that vegetables do not grow at Tobolsk, he tells us a story of a four apple, of which he swallowed a piece "like a pill." He continues, "The pasture is excellent; the grass grows every where equally well; consequently the inhabitants have a great deal of cattle." But, *Abbé*, you forget yourself; by allowing them a great number of cattle, you diminish the extreme misery you have talked of so often. The author has a mind to know

whether the ground at Tobolsk was thawed: he says, "The difficulty of having labourers in a country where all are slaves, made me apply to the governor." He says, "the difficulty of having labourers:" he ought to have said, My ignorance about the manners of the country, made me not know how to set about getting labourers; which made me apply to the governor. I will shew you how far you are mistaken in calling them slaves. In all Siberia, beginning at Solikamsk, there are no estates belonging to gentlemen. Siberia is a demesne, and no peasant in the demesnes of the crown is prevented earning his bread as he can: his taxes once paid, all the rest is his own; he may do with it just what he pleases: if he has a mind to change the place he lives in, he gets a pass for some years: at the end of the term he has it renewed; and this pass enables him to settle in any part of Russia he pleases, where he may buy, build, work, and every thing is his own: so that it pretty plainly appears, if *Mons. Chappe* could not get workmen to dig, it must have been for some other reason than what he has thought proper to give us. I should be sorry to attribute it to the *Abbé's* love of money, which made him rather choose to apply to the governor, than pay for the services done him; but from my knowledge of circumstances, I cannot help thinking this was the case, and that the *Abbé* was better pleased

to

to satisfy his curiosity at the expence of others, than at his own.

The governor gave the *Abbé* a dozen criminals, whom the *Abbé*, from an excess of generosity, rewards with some pence, with which they buy brandy to make their guard drunk, and escape. *Mons. Chappe* was then obliged to have recourse to his own ingenuity, which, as it is great, prompted him to thrust his sword into the ground ; and by this he found it was not frozen : he ends this paragraph by saying, “ This experiment altered the idea I had conceived of the climate of Tobolsky, and made me still more cautious of advancing circumstances from tradition and hearsay ; for I am persuaded the numerous mistakes found in the writings of some travellers, proceed rather from their credulity than from their disregard to truth.” Notwithstanding this fine sentence, I fancy, my good reader is long before now convinced, that *Mons. Chappe's* ingenious work abounds in both : a strong proof how wide the difference is between the words and the application. Here follow Mr. Gmelin's observations upon the cold in the different provinces of Siberia, which shew us that the winters vary there as they do every where else : next are those of Mr. de Lisle, upon the variations of the cold in different parts of the country.

The *Abbé* says, (speaking of Moscow) “ It is generally known, though this town stands more

to the south than Petersburg, that the cold is so severe in some winters, the inhabitants can scarcely resist it." The experience however of many ages shews, that the inhabitants of that, and other northern countries, do bear the cold, and bear it very well, as population, so far from decreasing, increases yearly. Cold as it may be, it must be bearable, because men and beasts live there and do well. The great cold at Petersburg does not last so long as at Moscow, because it is nearer the sea, and more exposed to the changes of the wind, which makes the weather more variable; but then that is made up again by the spring and autumn lasting a fortnight longer at Moscow. The *Abbé*, after having sufficiently expatiated on the cold, says, " Notwithstanding the degree of cold I have mentioned, corn grows in many of these places : the ground in general is very fit for agriculture in such parts of Siberia, where a black kind of earth is met with, like that of Tobolsk, and is consequently exceedingly fertile." Russia and Siberia buy no grain from strangers : on the contrary, foreigners very often buy grain in Russia ; and this branch of commerce is very considerable, and has been long subsisting.

In the records of Moscow, there is a letter from one of the kings of France, whose name I have forgot, to the Czar Ivan Wafiliewitsch, and the Czar's answer : the letter contains a desire, that the French may be allowed to export fifty thousand

thousand bushels of corn ; and the Czar's answer is, that he would be glad to oblige the King of France, but it was that year impossible, because the English, the Dutch, the Swedes, and the Danes, had already contracted for all the corn that was to be had at Archangel ; but that orders should be given against the next spring, that the king might have the desired quantity. Here then is the concurrence of five nations for the commerce of grain at Archangel. This trade was afterwards interrupted by the wars ; and after the building of Petersburg it was prohibited till 1763 : it was then allowed with restrictions for three years ; and in 1766, the leave was prolonged for six years more. Petersburg has also leave to export its corn ; but this commerce is not so important as that of Archangel, though, according to Abbé Galiani, it is of greater utility to the country.

The *Abbé* gives us a list of the provinces that do, and do not, produce corn : he might have shortened it, by saying, in few words, that those which are situated towards the south are more fruitful than those which lie along the Frozen Sea. Here I find a strange paragraph, which contradicts what I have just been saying, as well as the *Abbé's* own words : " The regions of the southern part of Siberia, towards the borders, produce no corn, or very little, as far as the confines of Astracan : this, however, appears to be

be the only part of Siberia fit for human beings to live in: the climate is mild, and the soil seems as if it would be fertile if cultivated; but for want of inhabitants, nothing but deserts are to be met with, which form a powerful barrier against the Tartars."

I have not the least idea what the *Abbé* would be at, when he says, "The regions of the south part of Siberia, towards the borders, produce no corn, or very little, as far as the confines of Astracan." Let us take the map, and follow the limits of Siberia from China to Astracan, which cannot be reckoned the boundary of Siberia, as the whole province of Orenbourg intervenes; so that, in the first place, the mode of speech is improper. The province of Nertschink is the first of those situated southward, which border on China, and which, the *Abbé's* own words tell us, is fruitful: here they are: "The province of Nertschink is very fruitful, and more so than any other part of Siberia: here the corn comes to its full perfection, and all kinds of fruits are produced: this fact is authenticated by travellers." This passage flatly contradicts the one I am refuting, and is a singular piece of inadvertency, at the distance only of two pages. This province, besides, reckons in it twenty-five thousand labourers. Then follows that of Selengiunsk. The soil is good and fruitful; and, together with the province just named, this helps

helps to supply those that are less fit for cultivation. Then Irkoutsk, which also produces corn. The districts of Yeniseisk, and of Krasnoiarsk, are less fit for agriculture; notwithstanding this, they have their annual sowing and reaping. Koufnetzk, and the country situated between this province and the river Irtysh, is as good a soil as can be desired for cultivation: the habitations there augment daily; and the proof of this is, that the spot of ground, which was formerly named the Desert of Barabinsk, is now covered with villages and ploughed fields; so that a traveller, that had passed there before, would not now suspect it to be the same place. If Olearius, and all the old authors, from whom the *Abbé* has thought proper to copy his mistakes and absurdities, were to return upon the earth, they would be obliged to own their works only fit for the flames: but let us travel after our academician.

I pass the river Irtysh, that I may follow the southern limits, and find out those provinces which the *Abbé* calls barren. I am now got between the Irtysh and the Tobol: this province is one of the most fruitful and best cultivated: and here, not according to *Mons. Chappe*, but to truth, finish the limits of Siberia, and begin those of the government of Orenbourg. The province of Oufa is peopled by Tartars, named Metschthoriaki, who give up their whole time to agriculture: they even rent the ground of their neighbours,
the

the Baschkir Tartars, for that purpose, these being fonder of hunting. About the government of Orenbourg, ground has been distributed to veteran soldiers: the soil must be exceedingly good and fit for cultivation, as we find that the ground bought thirty years ago, for fifteen of them, is now sufficient for three or four hundred. In the province of Oufa we go along the river Yaik, the banks of which are inhabited by the Cossacks of that name, who live by their own industry. Following the limits of Orenbourg will bring us into the government of Kasan, which lies between the river Kama and Samara. Neither is this Siberia, *Abbé*; your blunder now becomes too gross: the ground between these two rivers is remarkably well peopled and cultivated: it is occupied mostly by veterans; there is no part of it unemployed: from the two regiments of guards alone, more than a thousand families (besides those then already settled) have within these two years taken up their abode there. Crossing the river Samara, we find, between the Volga and the Yaik, the plain inhabited by the Kalmouks: these do not cultivate the ground; they are obliged to the provinces around them for their sustenance. But, as the *Abbé* said there was no corn till we came to the environs of Astracan, let us accompany him thither.

It obliges us to go up the Samara again, and down the Volga, whose border on the right
hand

hand is not only peopled by its antient inhabitants, but also by twenty-seven thousand colonies of different nations, from the Samara to the Tzaritzin. Go, *Abbé*; and see how this is cultivated: you will find some of your countrymen there, whom you would hardly know again, they are grown so fat by the good living they there met with. From Tzaritzin to Astracan, you will find, besides the colonies of the Herenhutters, numberless habitations of the Cossacks; and proceeding through them brings us to Astracan. I have not yet done with the refutation of this paragraph of the *Abbé's*; I have only as yet proved by facts, that he does not know what he says, when he tells us, that "the regions of the south part of Siberia, towards the borders, produce no corn as far as the confines of Astracan:" ignorance, and the desire of saying something, have produced that sentence. Are we to attribute what follows to the same cause? "This however appears to be the only part of Siberia fit for human beings to live in: the climate is mild, and the soil seems as if it would be fertile, if cultivated; but for want of inhabitants, nothing but deserts are to be met with, which form a powerful barrier against the Tartars."

Mons. L'Abbé, the southern limits of Siberia, which you extend, nobody knows why, as far as Astracan, cannot be the only habitable part of Siberia; because, from the time this country was

was conquered, to that of Peter the Great, all the establishments made in Siberia were more towards the north than the south; though it is true the northern provinces are less fit for cultivation than the others. I suppose that, as money was at that time scarce in Russia, as it was in the rest of Europe, the fine furs that were to be had in the north of Siberia induced that part of the country to be peopled preferably to the other. Latterly the attention of government has extended to the southern provinces. Siberia was mostly peopled with shepherds and hunters: it was very natural, that before Russia had it in her power to fix them, she should for a long while prefer the produce of grazing and hunting to that of agriculture; which last has crept on by imperceptible degrees. I must here observe, that, as these idolaters became christians, they also gradually shook off their pastoral life, and applied themselves to cultivating the earth. All that I have here said, is only to prove, that the north of Siberia can be inhabited by men, because it had for a long space of time a greater number of inhabitants, than the southern provinces. It is very possible that the climate may not be to the *Abbé's* liking: there is no disputing of taste any more than of colours; but men are not a bit less men for not having been in France, though the *Abbé* seems inclinable to make bears of them. To conclude the criticism upon this paragraph,

I must take notice of these latter words : “ But, for want of inhabitants, nothing besides deserts are to be met with, which form a powerful barrier against the Tartars.” I think I have proved to demonstration, that what the *Abbé* is pleased to call deserts, are inhabited and cultivated tracts of land ; that the habitations increase yearly ; that in some of the districts there is not a spot of ground unemployed ; and that the misery and poverty he so graciously endows them with, are merely the produce of his distempered brain : consequently this strong barrier, that he makes the Russians oppose to the Tartars, falls to the ground of itself. I can nevertheless account for this idea of the *Abbé*’s : he has turned over some old books, which have taught him that the despotic empires of Asia reduced their frontiers into deserts ; and, as upon all occasions he gives our sovereigns the title of despotic, so he very sensibly concludes, (conclusions are his heart’s delight) that Russia has chosen to make deserts of its boundaries against the Tartars.

After this paragraph, which has taken up so much of my time, the author says, “ The rest of the Russian empire is cultivated in several places.” It is odd, that he, with other scribblers of the like kind, should choose to express themselves thus : it would be far easier to name the parts which might be cultivated, and are not so ; the catalogue would not be long. Cultivation

so daily enlarges in Russia, that there can hardly be said to remain any ground worth mentioning as useless. There are many provinces where the want of land is complained of. The *Abbé* continues, "All the country between the Frozen Sea and the parallel of Petersburg, situated about the fixtieth degree of latitude, is hardly peopled at all: nothing but forests and marshes are to be seen there; and no corn, or at least very little. This climate produces no fruit, nor even any of the common vegetables." And in a note he cites "*Stralenberg Description de l'Empire de Russie*, tom. i. p. 26. and all the travellers." And pray observe, reader, that neither *Stralenberg*, nor any of the other travellers, ever were in that part of Russia. There are very few of them who go from Petersburg to Archangel, fewer still from Moscow to Archangel, none from Archangel to Tobolsk, &c. I have never been there myself: but since *Mons. Chappe* makes Petersburg his resting-place, it will not be amiss to observe, that in the province of Ingria, where Petersburg is situated, grain and vegetables grow exceedingly well; that this whole province was a marshy desert when Peter the Great began to build this town; that the labourers are constantly employed in draining the marshes; and that there were more than fifty thousand cultivators employed in this desert province in 1703.

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Let us now follow our dear *Abbé* into the northern provinces of Siberia, and take a particular view of them with the map before us: First, I cross the Neva, and go into Carelia: this province has been inhabited time out of mind; and its inhabitants are so famous for draining marshes, that they are sent for even into Courland when any such operation is to be performed. Their country is both stony and marshy, notwithstanding which they find means both to sow and reap. This province is inhabited by Finlanders and Russians, and extends as far as the lake Ladoga. Let us pass this lake, and we shall find the province of Olonetz, which is probably inhabited, because we know of thousands who are settled there, and of which a number work in the mines, others make pot-ash, and others are husbandmen. Next to this comes Kargapol, which is inhabited and cultivated, and even produces hemp. The province of Dwina, in which we find the port of Archangel; that of Meseu, where they grow oats; that of Waga, and of Wologda, are all inhabited, and produce corn in abundance: there is also a great quantity of timber in all these provinces. Yarensk, Totma, Galitch, and Chlinow, are among the provinces that furnish Archangel with corn; and there are numberless distilleries for brandy, particularly in Chlinow. The province of Tcherdin is less cultivated than that of Solikamsk: that of Pelim

is scarcely susceptible of cultivation: Tobolsk again, on the contrary, is greatly so. The borders of the Frozen Sea cannot be cultivated: they are however peopled by the ancient inhabitants of Siberia, who are retired there, and live by hunting and fishing; they have a great deal of cattle, and are so much accustomed to the rigour of their climate, that they would not know how to live in a milder: we have had many examples of some of these inhabitants coming to Moscow, and the more southern provinces, and dying in a few days of a hot fever.

The *Abbé* continues: "The remainder of Russia extends still two hundred leagues towards the south; and this is the only part where the soil appears fit for agriculture." I have already shewn how little he is to be trusted in this particular. He says, "The Ukraine is an exceedingly fruitful province, in which there is plenty of every thing. Most of the lands are cultivated in all the other provinces, from fifty-six degrees of latitude to the parallel of St. Petersburg; yet the corn thrives there but indifferently." And he again cites Strahlenberg: here are a number of errors in a very few words, *Abbé*: in the first place, though it be true that the Ukraine is exceedingly fruitful, and affords great plenty of every thing, yet the Ukraine is not the only province of which this may be said. The government of Belgorod, that of Oukraina Slobodskaia,

Slobodskaia, of Voronez, of Niznei Nowgorod, and in particular the kingdom of Casan, are all as fruitful, and better peopled: in the second place, I have already shewn, that the *Abbé* had before made a mistake about the northern latitude of the provinces that would bear cultivation. Here he has made a greater blunder: he says, "Most of the lands are cultivated in all the other provinces, from fifty-six degrees of latitude." But this moment he said the Ukraine was the most fruitful. Well, reader, the Ukraine begins at the forty-seventh degree. Kiow is situated in the fiftieth, Azow in the forty-seventh, Astracan the same. He said some time ago, that this last province was fruitful. Why then does he now fix upon the fifty-sixth degree as the first that is fit for cultivation? Is not this a shamefull inaccuracy? It is not however all: he adds, "Yet the corn thrives there but indifferently." Ask your own merchants, *Abbé*, whether the Russian corn is indifferent; and learn, that all the corn which the English, the Dutch, the Swedes, &c. fetch from Riga, is Russian growth: it comes from Plescow, from Smolensk, and from Nowgorod; and the corn-merchants very well know, and will tell you if you ask them, that the Russian corn keeps better than any other, as it is less damp, and less apt to turn mouldy. This is pretty strong evidence against you, good Mr. Academician. Upon my word, my patience almost

begins to fail me at the numberless contradictions I am obliged to refute. Can there be any great delight in being constantly obliged to say, This is not true—there is an absurdity—that is a designed mistake, &c. ? It is no easy matter to distinguish between your ignorance and your malevolence, and discover which of the two has guided your pen in this or that particular circumstance. You will perhaps enquire what has induced me to take all this trouble. Learn then, that it is zeal for my country which gives me the patience to read your book, and the desire to refute it. I have the honour to be a Russian; I glory in my country, and will defend it with my tongue, my pen, or my sword, as long as I have a drop of blood left, and should think myself too happy to shed the last in its service: and I do assure you, *Abbé*, though you take so much trouble to assert the contrary, I do not stand alone in those sentiments; there are numbers of my countrymen, who are infinitely better and worthier men than I am; but love, zeal, and gratitude to my country and sovereign, I share with all the Russians I am so happy to be acquainted with: were we as great boasters as some of our neighbours, there is, perhaps, no country that would furnish the world with more striking examples of patriotic zeal, great actions, and civil, military, and moral virtues, than ours. Do not defy me, *Abbé*; it would not be difficult

to provoke me to undertake the making a collection of them, to prove to the world how strangely paltry scribblers have imposed upon its credulity, by malice, stupidity, or ignorance; and how they have gained credit, merely because they appear too contemptible to deserve an answer. The time is now come, when it seems necessary to open the eyes of the world upon the wrongs done us, and set Russia forth in its true light: this it is that I have in part undertaken.

Let us then return to the task. *The *Abbé* goes on: "From my own observations, and the accounts of other travellers, I have traced a chart of this vast empire, where the cast of an eye shews the different tracts of land of which it is composed: those which are cultivated; those which, if they are not, might be; and those which are absolutely unfit for agriculture, because an eternal winter reigns there, and they offer nothing but barren deserts and boundless tracts of forest and morass." The *Abbé* has been at great pains to make a most inaccurate piece of work, in the twenty-seventh map of the third volume of his *Journey into Siberia*. He himself but a little while ago has told us, "That most of the lands are cultivated in all the other provinces, from fifty-six degrees of latitude, to the parallel of St. Petersburg"

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* This paragraph, as well as the map of Russia, which is here criticised, are omitted in the English translation of *Monsr. Chappe*.

Let us now examine the map. The provinces that are quite improper for cultivation are marked green ; those which might be cultivated, and are not, are yellow ; and those which are fruitful, are red. The red begins at Riga, and goes down to Kiow and Azow. Observe, reader, that here the *Abbé's* text flatly contradicts his map: he told us, that the land was cultivated from fifty-six degrees latitude, to the parallel of Petersburg; and the red line goes to the forty-seventh degree, as you may see. And pray do not forget, that I have asserted, that from the forty-seventh to the sixty-fourth, i. e. to Archangel, they sow and reap all kind of grain. But let us run after *Mons. d'Auteroche's* red line: he brings it from Azow down to Tzaritzin: but this last fortress is excluded from the fruitful land, though it be surrounded with colonies of Herrnhutters, and Moravian brethren, *who earn their bread at the sweat of their brow*. He goes up the Volga: the left side is admitted to the honour of bringing forth the fruits of the earth ; but the right is positively forbid any pretensions of the kind. The borders of the Samara, the fruitful part of Casan on the other side of the Volga, the provinces situated between the rivers Samara and Kama, and those on the other side the Kama, are all unmercifully precluded the privilege of the productive faculty, by the means of that formidable red line, without the least regard to
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the daily and convincing proofs of the injustice of this proceeding. After this you will not be surpris'd, reader, when the *Abbé*, having carried his line near Moscow and Nowgorod, gives it a sudden turn, and brings it back in a hurry to shut out Petersburg from the productive privilege. All this ill-will towards Russia is still nothing, compared to the severity with which poor Siberia is treated: two miserable little red spots in the middle, single out the only two districts which he chooses should afford corn. For pity's sake, good *Abbé*, extend this unmerciful red line; do not starve us all, as must undoubtedly be our fate if your account be consistent with truth: whether it is, or is not, will admit of very little doubt with the greatest part of my readers, who by this time must be pretty well acquainted with the accuracy of your observations. This map offers another instance of your precision: the green is to shew the parts entirely unfit for cultivation; and the yellow, those which might be cultivated, but are not. Did *Mons. Chappe*, I wonder, go over all Russia and Siberia, fathom by fathom, that he presumes thus to aver, "I have marked with green what cannot be cultivated, and with yellow that which might be, and is not?" This is still more amazing, than that the levels from Paris to Tobolsk were taken as he ran post; a circumstance which will undoubtedly fill the rising generation with

admiration and astonishment. You know, reader, it was the use he was to be of to them, that filled him with delight at the end of his observation upon the transit of Venus: he keeps this always in view, and I do not in the least question but that he will succeed at least so far as to make them wonder.

The *Abbé* gives us an extract from Mr. de L'Isle's Memoirs, by which we are to understand the climate of Siberia to be as cold as what is there said of Hudson's Bay. Then follows another citation, from Laurence Lange, who was very near having his nose frozen off in passing the mountains of Verchotourie. This passage proves nothing, because the nose was brought safe to the other side of the mountains. The *Abbé* by this adventure of the nose also means to prove the height of these mountains, and confirms it by his levels. Unluckily for *Mons. Chappe*, I am such an ignoramus as to require more convincing proofs of the truth of his assertions, than the frozen nose, or the levels taken running post. I shall dispense with the trouble of following the *Abbé* through the seven stages of heat and cold that he has favoured us with; I leave the determination of his accuracy in this point to the more learned: I shall only just observe, that at the end of this, he repeats, that "Nertschinsk is an exceedingly fruitful and temperate climate;" though

though we before took notice he in another place says, "That none of the southern provinces produce any grain."—*O tempora! O mores!*

*Of the GOVERNMENT of RUSSIA, from the
Year 861, to 1767.*

THE *Abbé* tells us, that "from 861 to 1596, Russia was governed by a succession of sovereigns all of the same family; and that, during this interval of more than seven hundred years, the eldest sons have always succeeded of course." And to this I add, that during these seven hundred years and more, i. e. to the death of the Czar Feodor Ivanowitsch, Russia was governed in the same manner, had the same manners, and was pretty much upon a level with most of the other European nations. *Monf. Chappe* says, "So long a filial succession should seem to prove, that Russia was then a free state; but the same annals, and all the historians assert, that the nation was ever governed by despotic princes: according to all probability, therefore, the government must have been rendered milder by some particular customs." I have a great deal to observe upon this setting-out: in the first place, *Abbé*, the term *despotic* is so often, and with so little reason, at your pen's end, that it were to be wished, for your own sake, you were ignorant of its meaning; and indeed there

there is some reason to suspect this to be the case: by Despotism the idea of Tyrant is always conveyed; and it is a circumstance that will hardly gain credit, that a lineal succession of *tyrants* should be allowed to reign for upwards of seven hundred years. Your own words tell us, "The government must have been rendered milder by some particular customs." If milder, why then tyrannical, *Abbé*? Experience proves that Russia had reason to be pleased with its government at that time, as it has constantly been increasing in power, as well as strength, without ever having given cause of complaint to its subjects; and it really seems evident, no other form of government could promise the same success, when one considers the great extent of the empire. Look, *Abbé*, into the second chapter of the instructions for the code of laws, by Catherine the Second. But what am I thinking of? why b'd *you* have recourse to our gracious Empress's code of laws? I had forgot that your mild and moderate government prohibited the sale of those instructions all over France, and that a peep into them might cost you your liberty. By the bye, *Abbé*, I do not think this was so prudent a stroke in French politics as some I could mention; it rather has the appearance of laying aside the mask, and leaving it at least doubtful, whether we are still, in the strain of adulation, to name your government Monarchical,

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or, in plain English, call it Despotic, and expect very soon to see *all the tyrant stand confessed*. It is, in one particular, with you as it is with us; the written will of the sovereign is a law—but with this difference, that none of our provinces will receive any other; whereas many of yours are governed without any written law at all. There are perhaps few nations, where laws are held more sacred than with us: no judge can give a decree without citing the law in conformity with which he acts, and none can be executed if they prove contrary to the laws: the Roman laws were introduced into Russia at the same time with christianity, because they were in part the laws of the church. The grand Duke Yaroslaw, father to St. Alexander Nevski, made laws, had them put into writing, and added to the antient laws of Nowgorod: these were no other than what were received all over the north. The Czar Ivan Wafiliewitsch had a new code made; so had the Czar Alexis Michailowitsch. The judges have been, time out of mind, named every year, and nobody could be condemned without being heard and judged. The ecclesiastics were consulted here, as in every other part of Europe, upon matters of importance. I think this government, in the true colours I have now represented it, seems ruled in pretty much the same manner as all the others in that age, and perhaps better than a great many.

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We have long ago observed, that the *Abbé's* particular pleasure is to mention only those things which he can shape to his own malevolence, and cautiously conceal whatever might set the nation in a distinguished light. Seven hundred years take up half a page; but a page and a half are employed to set forth the pretended crimes of the Czar Boris Goudonow; I say pretended, because the greatest part of them, neither the *Abbé*, nor any body else, has proofs of. This prince was unhappy, and the unhappy are always in the wrong. Many historians have repeated things of him, which they only had on hearsay, or from rumours thrown out by his enemies, or by opposite factions. An anecdote of the illustrious family of the Romanows, concerning this prince, does them too much honour, not to be related. When adulation to the successors gave rise to a proposal for digging up, and throwing out of the imperial sepulchre, the corpse of the unfortunate Boris, they never would consent to it: though he had been their particular enemy, (they said) he was the acknowledged sovereign of Russia, and no indignity should be offered to his remains. During the travels of Peter the First, the great tower of Moscow, which was built by Boris, was repaired. An inscription which had been made in honour of the founder was designedly covered with plaster, with a view to make court to the Emperor, who, the moment he

he heard of it, ordered it to be restored, saying, that the memory of a great man ought to be respected: and this inscription is still extant. The *Abbé* after this tells us, that at the death of the Czar Boris, the troubles and commotions increased daily, and continued till the year 1613. And here *Mons. Chappe* says, "Although the realm of Russia had never been elective, yet, under such circumstances, the nation was obliged to choose a sovereign. Michael Romanow, grandfather of the Czar Peter, was elected this year in an assembly of the chief Boyards; and the Russians submitted themselves to a youth of fifteen, without making any conditions."

Let us a little examine this remarkable event. The *Abbé's* own words say, that from the death of the Czar Feodor Ivanowitch "the commotions daily increased, and continued till the year 1613." At that time several people, remarkable for their abilities, united, to deliberate upon the means of putting an end to these commotions, and the calamities that were heaped upon the state: there being no descendant left of their antient sovereign, they cast their eyes upon the nearest remaining relation of so many Czars, under whom the nation had so greatly increased its power and strength: it tended to reunite the minds of the people for the great end of rescuing their country from ruin, to choose Michael Romanow, though at that time but fifteen years
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of age : he had a father, who would have been chosen emperor, had not his having taken religious vows, and being at the time detained a prisoner in Poland, made the thing impracticable : but this father's advice would make the young man act as they could wish. The event justified this method of reasoning : to have prescribed or laid down rules to this new sovereign, had been to prolong the troubles ; besides that it would have appeared a disagreeable novelty to the people, which the enemies to the public repose would not have failed to lay hold of, and turn to their own ends. The Czar Wafilii Chouiski had lost his life with his crown for attempting to introduce a new form of government. The people's voice upon that occasion was, *We will have one sovereign, and not twenty masters.* From what I have now said, good reader, you will agree with me, that common sense is wanting in the *Abbé's* conclusion, when he says, " From the readiness with which they consented to a change of the old constitution, it may be concluded, that it had not been formed by them, that they had not the least notion of liberty, or that they were extremely degenerated." Degenerated ! *Abbé !* do you call the mind of this prince Serge Troubetzkoi, of this Scheremeteff, of this monk of the Trinity convent, and of this merchant of Niznei Nowgorod (who furnished the money for the enterprise) degenerate ? They formed

A JOURNEY TO SIBERIA. 111

formed the plan of saving their country from the hands of the Poles, and effected it; of giving it a sovereign, and re-establishing good order and harmony throughout the empire: the most complete success attended all their undertakings, and you call them degenerate minds! I quit this subject, *Abbé*, for fear it should bring on so complete a quarrel as to rob me of the patience necessary for the continuation of my enquiries.

I shall only make one farther observation upon this paragraph. The *Abbé* says, that the Czar Michael Romanow "was elected by an assembly of the chief Boyards." Many authors, for want of a more competent knowledge of the Russian customs, have termed all the nobles Boyards, whilst this title is only given by the sovereign to those who are invested with the highest dignities, and is not hereditary.

The *Abbé* continues, "His son Alexis Michaelowitz came to the throne in 1645, without any other form of election." What form of election could there be? Did not the *Abbé* tell us, that for upwards of seven hundred years the eldest sons succeeded to their fathers? what can he now mean by observing, that the son succeeded "without any other form of election?" He adds, "His reign was disturbed with seditions and civil wars, chiefly occasioned, it seems, by the despotic sway which Morosoff, favourite of the

the Czar, exercised over the empire." This Morosoff was brother-in-law to the Czar: he had married the sister of the Czarina Maria Iliinichna, of the family of Miloslawski. This man had so little genius, that it is amazing historians should choose to attribute to him the seditions and intestine wars, which prevailed under this reign. Other causes may be found much more likely to have that effect. One of these civil wars was occasioned by the erection of a council to revise and correct the translations of the Bible and other books belonging to the church: this, undoubtedly, Morosow could have no hand in, as he might very well boast with the antient nobility of France, *I am a gentleman, for I can neither read nor write*. Our author next cites *Mons. de Voltaire* for the following observation: "That this part of the world being less restrained by manners, than any other, it was necessary it should be restrained by corporal punishments, and that those punishments gave birth to slavery." Nobody can have a more profound respect for *Mons. de Voltaire* than myself; and I will only beg this great man's leave to submit to his judgment a few observations that occur to me on the foregoing passage. There never was a nation more governed by manners and customs than ours: every one knows the pains it took to reform its manners in the beginning of this century; but what its antient manners were, is, I believe, not so well known: let

let us take a short view of them, and look into the principal houses. These were small and *entirely free from luxury*—a whole family was lodged in a very narrow compass—the outward apartments for the men, the inner rooms for the women—every family attended Mattins, Mass, and Vespers, as regularly as the day came: thus religious occupations were their chief employment: it was customary that at noon all the men should resort to the place where justice was administered, there to talk over their business and public affairs; and if any young man was observed to neglect attending this place two days following, it became a matter of complaint to his father, and of reproach to himself, as an unpardonable carelessness and sure sign of a bad conduct, which made him afraid of meeting the eyes of his friends, and give up the advantage he might reap from being instructed in national affairs, and the state of the empire. The remainder of the day was always devoted to the care of their families; and the whole household, wife, children, and servants, were constantly in the presence of the master, who, thus surrounded, was obliged to pay a continual attention to the propriety of his own conduct for the sake of example, and had it always in his power to watch over theirs.—The most perfect harmony reigned in every house—divorces were scarcely ever heard, or even thought of—children paid the greatest respect for
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their parents: but what will give a higher opinion of the morals of those days than any thing I can say in favour of them, is the remarkable clause that used to be inserted in all contracts, and is as follows: *Should it happen that I recede from my promise, or do not keep up to the strictest sense of it, may shame then be my portion.* Shame was then the *ne plus ultra*: they knew no punishment more terrible. Can there be a greater proof of good morals than this? Can any nation shew an equivalent to it? And this clause was never omitted till they ceased to live as they had done, and the commotions of the state at the death of the Czar Ivan Wafiliewitsch prevailed over the simplicity of their manners. It is possible that some few examples of severity may have given room to believe, "that punishments governed these men better than morals; and that those punishments gave birth to slavery," as *Mons. Voltaire* says in the passage cited by the *Abbé*. But did not horrible punishments at that time prevail among all the other European nations? Ours were severe, it is true; but if it were not displeasing to discourse longer upon so disagreeable a subject, I would demonstrate, that as we took our rods, and manner of whipping, from the Romans, all the other horrors of this kind, we are possessed of, were imitated from other nations: let these in their turn imitate us if they are wise, and model their criminal jurisdiction

jurisdiction upon the tenth chapter of the instructions for the code of laws, by the Empress Catharine the Second, which has been prohibited both in Paris and Constantinople.

The *Abbé* says, "After the death of the Czar Alexis, which happened in 1677, the nation became more and more enslaved." How will *Mons. Charpe* prove this passage, I wonder? The following one is not less extraordinary: "Feodor died in 1682, without children:" and immediately after, "The Princess Sophia, daughter of Feodor, by the first marriage, formed the design of placing herself at the head of the empire." What a contradiction is here, *Mons. L'Abbé*! this Feodor died childless, and yet his daughter Sophia formed the design of placing herself at the head of the empire. Is it possible to make a more gross and unpardonable blunder than this? it needs no commentary. The Princess Sophia was daughter to the Czar Alexis Michaelowitsch, sister to Feodor, and not daughter to her childless brother, as the *Abbé* (for variety I suppose) has made her. A great deal has been said about this princess; but I do not think that in general authors have done her justice: it was her eldest brother the Czar Ivan, who, by his unbounded confidence in her, had in a manner intrusted her with the care of the whole government. The youth and weakness of this eldest brother, and the infancy of the youngest, (the Czar Peter)

left the reins entirely to her management. Her mother-in-law, and all her kindred, were in opposition to the princess. It appears pretty plain, that the talebearers and sycophants had too fine an opportunity here of displaying their talents, to neglect making the best use of them in fomenting quarrels among men whose minds were thus divided : they succeeded to admiration. We must however do the Princess Sophia justice, and, divesting ourselves of partiality, say, that she conducted the affairs of the empire for many years with great sagacity. Upon an examination of the things she did, and those which passed through her hands, we cannot but own, that she was very capable of governing. When they wanted to wrest the reins out of her hands, her ambition excited new troubles, which were not put an end to till Peter the Great shut her up in a monastery, where she finished her days.

After these troubles, and having mentioned the revolts of the *Strelzi*, the *Abbé* continues, " But the nation, accustomed to rebellion and slaughter, always had the renewal of these crimes to fear." Is it possible that a man, who lives in a country where never a day passes without some poor wretch being hanged for the most trifling thefts, should talk in this manner of a nation where executions are never thought of, but for the most horrible crimes ; where tortures are totally banished, and punishing with death scarce ever heard of ? He continues, " Peter the

the First in 1689, taking the reins of government in his own hands, conceived the design of reforming and civilizing the nation ; but being more absolute than any of his predecessors, he drew the bands of slavery still closer." I beg my reader to judge whether any thing can be more plain than the contradiction these few lines contain. What ! is civilizing a nation drawing the bands of slavery closer ? Is Peter the Great, who instituted a senate, to which he gave the power of remonstrating, if they found any thing in his decrees either contrary to the laws, or hurtful to the state—is he here accused of having drawn the bands of slavery closer ? he who opened his empire to strangers, who, at his own expence, sent his subjects to travel for instruction ? But why should this imputation of the *Abbé's* take up more of my time ? every particular that regards Peter the Great is too well known for *Mons. Chappede's* aspersions to gain ground ; he therefore in this circumstance, as he has done in many others, only exposes himself.

Four lines contain the death of Czar Peter, the reign of the Empress Catharine the First, and that of Peter the Second, grandson to Peter the First. He next tells us, that " the Prince Dolgorouki and Count Osterman, who composed the high council, suppressed the will of the Empress Catharine, and raised the report that Peter the Second on his death-bed had named

the Princess, Duchess Dowager of Courland, his successor." This high council, *Abbé*, was not composed of only one Prince Dolgorouki and Count Osterman, but of a great many princes of that family, and of the Galitzins, besides many other noblemen and princes of the empire. There was no report raised about Peter the Second having named any successor; a numerous council of state does not commonly fall into such absurdities: they openly elected the Princess Ann, Duchess of Courland, to be Empress, upon condition she signed particular articles which they had drawn up; and she subscribed without hesitation, supposing them to be dictated by the general voice of the nation: but when she arrived at Moscow, and found that the voice of the nation did not agree with these articles, she looked upon them as void, and proceeded to put herself in possession of the rights of her ancestors. Had you been better informed, *Abbé*, and taken more pains to be exact, you would have saved me a great deal of trouble.

Mons. Chappe goes on: "This Princess had brought with her her favourite, Biron, a native of Courland: in her name, as Empress, he ruled the Russians with a rod of iron: he seemed already to have conceived the design of making himself one day master of the throne: he subdued the nation by the severity of punishments, and by sending numbers as exiles into Siberia. The
Empress

Empress Ann created him Duke of Courland." What a choice collection of expressions, to put things in the worst light possible! If any one were to say, The king of France went a hunting, and took with him his favourite, Choiseul, a native of Lorraine, it would immediately be said, This man expresses himself very improperly. And here is an academician who tells us, "The Empress brought with her her favourite, Biron, a native of Courland:" and immediately after, "In the name of the Empress he ruled the Russians with a rod of iron:" "He subdued the nation by inflicting punishments." However severe and harsh this reign may have been, *Mons. Chappe*, I am convinced that the so-much-boasted-of Cardinal Richelieu will bear the comparison: *he* indeed ruled with a rod of iron in the name of Lewis XIII. he did not conceive the design of making himself *one day* master of the throne; but he reigned, in fact, a most despotic tyrant: *he* subdued *your* nation by punishments and banishing—not into Siberia: indeed he had no Siberia to send the unhappy sufferers to: Canada was taken from you by the English; but the heaths of Bourdeaux, and the sands of Olonne, served his purpose just as well: so you have but little to reproach us with on that head. The latter part of the *Abbé's* paragraph says, "After the death of the last prince of the house of Ketler, the Empress Ann created him (Biron) Duke of

Courland." It was not the Empress Ann who created him a duke ; it was Augustus the Third, of the house of Saxony, whom the Empress had placed upon the throne of Poland, who, out of gratitude, first proposed to the court of Russia to elect the great chamberlain, Count Biron, Duke of Courland ; which being done, the King of Poland gave him the investiture.

After this the *Abbé* gives an account of the death of the Empress, of the accession of the young prince of Brunswic, Ivan the Third, of the regency of the Duke of Courland : and then he says, " The Princess of Brunswick, the Emperor's mother, could not however submit to the sway of the regent ; she therefore thought of shaking it off, and fixed upon General Munich, a stranger in Russia, to assist her in the undertaking." It was not this weak princess who formed the plan of arresting the regent ; but it was Marshal Munich, who, upon seeing the general discontent of the nation, first made this proposal to the Princess Elizabeth, daughter of Peter the Great : she declined entering into the plan ; upon which the Marshal laid it before the Princess of Brunswic, who was with much difficulty prevailed upon to agree to it. From this state of the fact, the answer to the Princess, which the *Abbé* frames for the General, falls to the ground of itself : we will, however, take it up, and offer it to our readers, for fear they should not have observed the

the smartness of it. Here it is: "Munich, well acquainted with Biron and the Russians, made answer to the Princess, that this scheme having been in agitation, she and her party run the greatest hazard of being confined, if Biron himself was not imprisoned within twenty-four hours." What does he mean to insinuate, by "Munich was well acquainted with Biron *and the Russians, &c.*?" Does he wish us to understand, that the Russians were attached to Biron? That is an impossibility no argument could support. Marshal Munich was, without doubt, sufficiently acquainted with them, not to undertake a matter he was not sure they were fully determined upon: it was in this manner he went to work: he knew that the first wish of the nation was at that time for the Princess Elizabeth; upon her refusal, he had recourse to the Princess of Brunswick, who, though she was neither beloved nor esteemed, had a sort of merit, as being mother to the Emperor. I can, without any great difficulty, discover what the *Abbé* would be at in the passage just mentioned: he is desirous to make us pass for people that are not to be trusted, for traitors in short; and in consequence, I will answer for it, he wishes us all hanged, and that would rid him of the whole nation at once. The entire sentence however falls at once, whatever ill-nature and malice it may be big with; for there was but the interval

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of four hours between the proposal, the agreement, and the execution.

It is also very certain, (though the *Abbé* affirms the contrary, merely to make it appear that mistrust reigned on all sides) that Marshal Munich, not only spent the evening, but supped with the Duke of Courland, whom he arrested the same night. The *Abbé* affects to call the Duke nothing but plain Biron: he says, "Biron was banished a few days after into Siberia, where he was shut up in a house built in the middle of a marsh." The Duke of Courland was not sent into exile till after his conduct had been scrupulously examined; and judged by a committee appointed for the purpose: in consequence of this, he was sent into Siberia, not into a house built in the middle of a marsh, but to Pelym, which was the place General Munich had pitched upon; and a house was there built by his order for the Duke: whether the soil was more or less dry than in some other places, I cannot positively affirm; but certain it is, the house was not built in a marsh.

Here follows the most insulting passage that the *Abbé's* spleen, or his malice, could dictate: he says, "The various revolutions Russia had already experienced, made way for others, and facilitated the success of them. The people, always slaves, were attached to their sovereign neither by laws nor affection; so that the crown
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was exposed to every one who had courage enough to seize upon it, by policy or superior strength." The invidious malice contained in this paragraph, gives me a right to lay aside all restraint, and shew the world, in as plain a light as it appears to me, the views and designs of *Mons. L'Abbé Chappe d'Auteroche* and company. Europe was forming a very high opinion of the power of the Russian empire: this opinion was likely to be prejudicial to that political interest, which is ever in direct opposition to us: it was therefore proposed to root it out, as much as possible, by demonstrating, that the Russian power was very far from being as formidable as it has of late years appeared. The publication of the observations on the transit of Venus, was too good an opportunity for this attempt, to be neglected: they accordingly set about describing the form of our government, the genius and character of our people, in the most odious light possible: they have besides applied themselves to diminish the annual revenues of the state, the sea and land forces, the population, the produce of the trade and mines, and the quality of the soil. To make up for this again, they have augmented and extended as much as possible our forests, deserts, and marshes. The Russians are not at this present time more fond of letting foreigners into the real state of their empire, than any other nation; it is therefore rather difficult

difficult to imagine how the *Abbé* contrived, as he was running post, to obtain information enough to enable him to form such analytical tables as you have already met with, gentle reader, if you have been at the pains of perusing his book, where the forces and revenues of the empire are calculated with the greatest accuracy, if you will believe the *Abbé*, down to the last farthing. Is it an improbable conclusion to draw, that he must have been obliged for this to some arithmetical head, which he has prevailed upon to throw imaginary sums upon paper, and make calculations from them, with an exactness that would deceive any body but a Russian, who is enough acquainted with the real state of his empire, to discover the ideal basis they are founded upon? Whether it be fear or envy that has guided *Monf. Chapé's* pen, I will not take upon me to decide; but *both* these sentiments are equally incompatible with the contempt he affects to express; therefore *the pains* he takes to make us appear despicable, are the most certain proofs we in reality are not so.

But let us return to the paragraph that has led us into this long discussion. The *Abbé* said, "The various revolutions Russia had already experienced, made way for others, and facilitated the success of them." I shall now aver a fact, which will astonish many people; and it is, that Russia has never yet undergone a revolution, but
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when the nation found itself in danger of falling into a state of weakness. We have boren with very severe reigns, but we never yet could be patient under weak ones: our constitution requires to be supported with vigour: when that is wanting, discontent becomes universal; and if nothing is done to get the better of that, a revolution is the consequence. Caprice has never had any share in them; examine them every one separately, and the cause will always prove founded on events. Any cabals, that have not taken rise from the cries of the nation, have constantly failed of success. The troubles in the reign of Peter the Great, who undoubtedly was no weak prince, will perhaps be objected to me: these very troubles are most convincing proofs of what I have alledged: there were three very remarkable tumults in his time; two during his infancy: the first, when the Streltzi (by the instigations of the Princess Sophia, against the Dowager Czarina, of the Narishkin family) thought the Princess's administration in danger: the second, when the Roskolniki non-conformists made themselves masters of the cathedral of St. Michael, that divine service might be performed in it according to their rites: the third was, when the Streltzi were ordered to march towards Astracan; and that, by the negligence of their commander, they found themselves in want of provisions for three weeks, they would not go on any farther, and revolted
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against the commander near the Resurrection Convent; and part of them returned to Moscow. This last cannot be reckoned in the same line with the two first; for where are the troops that would not have done the same in a like case? All these commotions, that made such a noise in Europe, brought on no revolution, and were very easily quelled. It would be difficult to point out a nation that has not been subject to the like troubles; they could not be called rebellions; they were mere mobs without any meaning, such as a judicious government always disperses with more celerity than they are raised.

I know that most foreigners are led into the error of believing that conspiracies are more frequent in Russia than in any other country. I can account for this prejudice: in the first place, trifles have often been treated with too much attention, and by that means become serious in their consequence; in the second place, the very bad use that was made of the secret committee, gave rise to the greatest discontent, as no one could be banished or punished without being previously judged; so all the little court intrigues were laid open, brought before, and decided upon, by this committee, which perfectly resembled that of the Bastille. According to our laws, the secret committee could pass judgment only in three cases; offences against the church, the sovereign, or the state: any thing else could only be

be brought before it by express order of the sovereign. The public, only acquainted with the letter of the law, and seldom apprised of the secret orders given to this tribunal, concluded, that whatever was decided there, was a matter of importance; while very often it was employed on the most uninteresting trifles: but the abolishing of this committee put an end to all these disorders; and it is very unlikely the nation should be thus totally changed in so short a time, as it must have been pretty nearly in the same state as at present. The dread of this committee easily accounts for the tumults it occasioned: it was a very useless bugbear to our country, and proved very hurtful to it abroad, as it certainly gave opportunity to several European nations to judge of us differently from what we deserved.

Those words of the *Abbé's*, that we are next to comment upon, really displease me beyond measure: he says, "The people, ever in a state of slavery, were not attached to their sovereign either by law, or by affection." No one part of his book furnishes so clear a proof, that the *Abbé* is totally unacquainted with the character of the Russians. There is not a nation in Europe more firmly and affectionately attached to their sovereign than ours. The *Abbé* was not aware how strongly he proved this, when he said, That for upwards of seven hundred years a lineal descent of the same family had governed Russia;
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the eldest sons always succeeding without the least contest: and if this be not sufficiently convincing, I can lay before my reader an instance of affection to the sovereign, and to the country, the more striking, as it happened at a time when political science could have but little share in it.

The Czar Ivan Wafiliewitsch was but five years old when his father died; he was left under the direction of his mother. Two brothers of the late Czar claimed a right to the guardianship: the nobility took share in the dispute; some were for the mother, others for the uncles: the whole nation became engaged in the contest, and a general confusion ensued. While matters were in this situation, the Tartars in the Crimea having entered into a league with the Kan of the Tartars of Casan, they made three irruptions at once into different parts of Russia. The instant this news reached Moscow, it put an end to all these divisions: the chiefs of the different factions met, and obliged themselves by an oath to lay aside all private animosity, and to unite in defence of the young Czar and their country: they faithfully kept their oath: four bodies of troops were immediately raised, one to stay with and defend the sovereign, the other three to march against the Tartars: these gained a complete victory, and returned to Moscow triumphant over the common

common enemy, and over their own passions, fired by an ardent zeal for their sovereign and country.

Such facts the *Abbé* carefully avoids relating: it is not however the scarcity of them which makes him overlook them: our history furnishes numberless examples of the kind: what may have been his reason, I shall not determine.

There is a reflexion of the *Abbé's* at the end of this paragraph, which I cannot pass unnoticed: "Intrigue, and (*le droit du plus fort*) the right of the strongest, offered the crown to whoever had courage enough to lay hold of it." *Mons. Chappe* goes upon a wrong principle, if he thinks the revolution, in favour of the Princess Elizabeth, authorizes him to make this remark: it was what really would (with the same attending circumstances) have happened in any other part of the world. The will of the Empress Ann had named Prince John of Brunswick, then two months old, to be heir to the throne; and the Duke of Courland to be regent. Nothing was ever worse contrived, nor more repugnant to common sense. It stood to reason, that a minority, always weak, would be entirely unsupportable under such a regent, who was a stranger in the country, was of a different religion, and had the father and mother of the pupil his open and direct opponents: and there was, besides all this, a daughter alive of Peter the Great, who was deservedly adored by

the people, for a thousand great and good qualities she was possessed of. Would France have endured such a minority patiently, *Abbé*? Set your Salic law aside for a moment, and suppose the case your own, would not intestine wars and revolutions have appeared unavoidable? Could your parliaments have avoided declaring themselves for the blood of your kings; and would the nation have suffered that to be set aside in favour of a child of two months old, and a foreigner, to be regent? No surely; they would have acted as we did: the whole nation was unanimous for the Princess Elizabeth; nor would she ever have thought of ascending the throne had there been a division; but every voice was for her. If ever you should happen to ask me, *Abbé*, what I understand by the general cry of the nation, I shall answer you, that whenever we find the state in any imminent danger, there is a point, upon which, among us, as well as other nations, the generality agree: this point re-unites all the minds: it is that to which the state owes its preservation: when this point is settled, the revolution is at hand; and if this cannot be determined, the cabals never come to any thing; they remain weak, unsupported, and without effect, because they only contain the wish of a few individuals. Do not infer from this, *Abbé*, (you, who are so fond of inferences) that these cabals are frequent. I cannot mean to say that, because it is not so;
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but as there are wicked and mischievous people in all countries, we have been so unlucky as to have our share of them now and then. But to return to our book:

The *Abbé* relates the accession of the Empress Elizabeth, and he relates it ill: he says, that "Lestoc, a foreign surgeon, attached to the Princess Elizabeth, formed the design of placing her upon the throne." It is very certain, that the nation was unanimous about it, and that it was not Lestoc who first proposed it. This Princess never passed through the streets, that some of the mob did not exhort her to make herself mistress of the throne of her ancestors: there were people who mentioned it to the Count Michel Worontzoff, one of the gentlemen belonging to her court, and not page, as the *Abbé* calls him: it was upon finding the minds thus disposed, that Lestoc took upon him to persuade the Princess into compliance. The Princess regent heard of it, and asked the Princess Elizabeth, whether it was true, that Lestoc frequented the foreign ministers, upon whom her suspicions fell? The Princess answered, that Lestoc never went to any of them; which also was true. This conversation hastened on the instant of the crisis, the account of which (as given by the *Abbé*) is as tiresome, as it is little to be depended upon. At this decisive moment he places the story of two sketches, hastily drawn upon cards, that

Lestoc pulled out of his pocket ; a fact, which, if the *Abbé* had not wanted to make up his little romance, would be very little worth relating : however, as he has mentioned it, I shall give my reader a true account of it, destitute of the *Abbé's* embellishments :—A few weeks before the Princess's accession to the throne, Lestoc was attending at her toilette, and pulling a card out of his pocket, he with a pencil drew on one side a crown, and on the other a rack, and shewing it her, he said, “ There is no medium ; either the one is for you, or the other for me.”

The *Abbé* goes on, saying, “ Lestoc now talked to her of nothing but the success of her undertaking. He prevailed upon her to wear the ribbon of the order of Russia.” This is a mistake ; she left her own house with nothing on but the order of St. Catharine, which she had worn ever since the coronation of the Empress Catharine the First, her mother, and did not put on the order of Russia till she was in the palace chapel, after having taken the oaths of fidelity. The author continues, “ Elizabeth, attended only by four persons, advanced towards the palace to seize upon the empire.” She was not attended by four persons, but by near four hundred grenadiers of the regiment of the guards : the drummer neither did nor would beat his drum : the guard in the palace took the oaths of allegiance to their Empress, the instant she summoned them

to acknowledge the daughter of Peter the Great : there was not the least hesitation about it, as it was the unanimous wish of the nation. And here *Monf. Chappe* places this judicious remark : “ She spoke to slaves ; they prostrated themselves before her, then joined her few adherents.” Do you call our soldiers slaves, *Abbé*, because the guard of the palace acknowledged as their Empress the daughter of Pétér the Great ? because the love of the soldiers for the memory of that great monarch, who had so often led them to victory, extended to the only remains of his house ? because they took the oaths of allegiance to the daughter of the *restorer* of their empire, to the sole heiress that was left of the illustrious blood of so many sovereigns ? You say, “ She spoke to slaves ; they prostrated themselves before her, and joined her few adherents.” Why are our troops more slaves than those of any other country ? That this is a groundless assertion, I will prove immediately ; but first let me tell you, they did not “ prostrate themselves,” nor ever do : this is an expression you have made use of to give an idea of meanness, and draw an ignominious picture, for the materials of which you are alone obliged to your imagination. That the adherents were not few, I have already said, because there were four hundred of them ; but four, or four hundred, was in this case much the same. Her friends were many, because the

hearts and wishes of the whole empire were among them: and this the regent herself was not ignorant of.

Let me now compare our troops with yours, *Abbé*, and see why you think proper to give them the denomination of slaves. I know (in Europe) but of three ways of raising soldiers. The first and most antient (in use with none but the Turks at present) is, to distribute tracts of land, which you called *fiefs*, in Turkish *timars*, and in Russian *pomesties*, subject to the condition of supplying the state with a certain number of military men whenever required. Peter the Great, and the Empress Ann, made free grants of these fiefs to the nobles who were possessed of them, and remitted the service incident to them. The second method of raising troops, is to give a man a certain sum of money for so many years service, upon contract of his being free again at the end of that time; but the custom of *adbering* to these contracts is at an end. Were this manner of inlisting customary in Russia, our army would be three times more numerous than it is, because it is very convenient to be fed, clothed, and paid, without doing any duty; and then, at the end of the contract, for the soldiers to choose the way of life they like best. The third manner of raising men, is to oblige every province to furnish a determinate number of recruits: this method is followed
always

always in Russia, and often in Prussia, in France, in Sweden, &c. and I believe such recruits are more to be depended upon than any others : it is true they are required and furnished ; but I do not see why this should draw upon them the name of slaves, more than upon those of any other nation. In France a deserter is hanged ; in Russia he never is. Neither your soldiers, nor ours, have it in their power to go, or not to go, at pleasure : the state exacts service ; it is a duty to do it ; but there is no sort of reason why those who are obliged to do this duty, should be called slaves. In Russia a deserter, who returns to his duty, is received without the slightest punishment : it very seldom happens that a Russian soldier deserts, but after committing some crime that deserves punishment, from which it is then natural to run away. Ask the foreign volunteers, who have served in our army, whether the Russian soldiers can be called slaves : let them tell you how many brave and generous actions they have seen done by them, and you will learn to be more just another time, *Abbé*.

Mons. Chappe says, " Lestoc distributed the confidential people in the most suspicious posts, and kept the rest about him ; *their fidelity he was assured of, as he was always at hand to command them.*" There is a great deal of malice and design in this last sentence. You are to understand by it, reader, that Lestoc could only trust them

while they were within his sight: I need not here prove how groundless this assertion is, by repeating what I have already said, that all the hearts were united for Elizabeth, as the *Abbé* himself, inadvertently, tells us so in the very next line. "All the guards of the palace yielded at the bare name of Elizabeth." And here the *Abbé* sets his imagination to work, and brings forth a very pretty little romance: we here give it you, reader, in his own words: "She came at last to the door of the regent's chamber, who was fast asleep, and had the Emperor her son, the young Ivan, by her side. Here Elizabeth first met with opposition: the officer on guard presented his bayonet, and not only put himself in a posture of defence, but also threatened to kill any one who should advance upon him. Lestoc immediately cried out to him with a loud voice, Wretch! what dost thou mean? beg mercy of the Empress. The slave instantly betrayed his sovereign, and Elizabeth entered the apartment with her followers. The regent had been awaked by the noise she had heard. The Princess Elizabeth addressed her first, and the regent said, What! madam, is it you?" It is, I believe, uncommon to find a tale so totally void of truth, and told with so many minute circumstances; but this is what the *Abbé* excels in; and you will admire him as much as I do, reader, when I have taken this little romance to pieces, and proved beyond a doubt, that

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that no single instance of it ever happened.

He says, " She (the Empress Elizabeth) came at last to the door of the regent's chamber." She did not go up stairs, but was below the whole time; and the regent's apartments were in the second story. Then he says, " The regent was fast asleep, and had the Emperor her son, the young Ivan, by her side." The fact is, that the Emperor was in his own apartments with his nurses and attendants, and the regent was in hers with her husband. Those lines then—" Here Elizabeth first met with opposition—the officer on guard presented his bayonet, &c." are mere fiction. Elizabeth did not go up-stairs, which makes it impossible the officer should have presented his bayonet to her: what is more, he had no bayonet to present. It is very well known, that neither officers nor soldiers in Russia ever have bayonets, or even muskets, when they are upon guard at court: he did not then defend the entry of the apartment, in the manner described; nor in any other whatever. I assure you, reader; for there was no officer there: the piquet at the bottom of the stair-case had been taken off, and at the top there were only two sentries, who surrendered the instant they were called upon in the name of Elizabeth. This sets aside the exclamation the *Abbé* invents for

for Lestoc, "Wretch! what dost thou mean? beg mercy of the Empress;" as well as the ingenious reflection that follows it, "The slave instantly betrayed his sovereign." We shall put these together, with the conclusion of the romance: "Elizabeth entered the apartment with her followers—the regent had been awaked by the noise—the Princess Elizabeth addressed her first; and the regent said, What! madam, is it you?" These words then let us give up to the winds, to waft them back to Utopia, whence they came. As the Princess Elizabeth did not go up-stairs at all, she did certainly not enter the regent's apartments. It is besides very well known, that these two Princesses did not see each other, either during the transaction, or after it; so that the story, as the *Abbé* has represented it, might make a very pretty scene in a play, but is not so pleasing in history, which is expected and ought to contain nothing but undeniable facts.

At the end of this narrative, he makes it a matter of astonishment, that "Elizabeth, seated on the throne of her forefathers, should command, and that all obeyed." He is just ready to impute as a crime to us, our obedience to our sovereigns: that would be carrying his ill-will to a height indeed! *Mons. Chappe*, when your queens Maria de Medicis, and Ann of Austria, came sword in hand to force the parliament to acknowledge them

them as regents, did not all obey them instantaneously? Their pretensions were however very far from being as well grounded as those of our Empress. The *Abbé* continues, "Five or six thousand men swore fidelity to the Princess Elizabeth, determined to murder both the regent and their Emperor, if Elizabeth should command them; or else to assassinate her, if the regent could possibly take the lead but for one instant. The rumour of the Princess Elizabeth's accession to the throne began however to spread; but those who propagated the news in public, were looked upon as dangerous persons; so that it was safest to shun them, or else not to enter into conversation with them."

It will sufficiently expose the malicious intention of this paragraph, to give my reader the simple narrative of the thing as it really happened. As soon as the regent, her family, and those persons that appeared suspicious, were secured, the Empress ordered all the troops in Petersburg to be assembled, which amounted to above twenty thousand men: she summoned the senate and the synod to attend her in the palace: there she ordered her manifesto to be read, and they all took the oaths of allegiance in the chapel of the palace; which ceremony being ended, the senate ordered the manifesto of the accession to be printed and published. Twenty thousand men in motion at once, *Abbé*, and coming from different parts of the town, makes it but an unlikely matter, that the accession should still have

have been a secret ; and the manifesto printed and published immediately, takes away the necessity of supposing it to have been needful to shun those that spread the news, as dangerous persons.

Monf. Chappe continues, "Lestoc had had an eye to every circumstance : while he was conducting his sovereign to the throne, the manifesto which proclaimed Elizabeth Empress was printing." It is very certain, that Lestoc had a great share in the whole of this event ; but none in the writing or publishing this manifesto, as it was not written till after the Empress had assembled the senate ; when Prince Czerkaski, chancellor of the empire, Prince Nikita Troubetskoi, and Count Worontzow, drew it up in the Empress's presence : and a proof of this is, that when she saw them beginning it in the usual form, *We*, by the grace of God, Elizabeth, &c. she stopped them, and said, I am only the first after God ; therefore put, By the grace of God, *We*, Elizabeth, &c. and this form, introduced at that moment, has been adhered to ever since. *Monf. Chappe* says, " And in this revolution, which took place from the 5th to the 6th of October, 1741, there was not one drop of blood spilt." Is not this a very strong proof, *Abb'*, that the minds were not so much bent upon murder, as you, a little while ago, would have had us think ? The next paragraph tells us, " The Empress Elizabeth reigned till the year 1762, frequently disturbed with

with the apprehensions of being dethroned in her turn." This recalls to my mind the bits of candle the *Abbé* used to measure in the Empress's private apartments. He has the art of finding out things nobody else could come at with so much ease. Did the Empress Elizabeth, I wonder, impart her apprehensions to *Mons. Chappe* upon this occasion? Never had any one less reason for them than she had: she was most exceedingly beloved: and even the latter part of her reign, when constant illnesses prevented her giving all the requisite attention to the administration, then, though confusion naturally introduced itself into different parts, still she was respected, beloved, and pitied for her sufferings; and all the displeasure fell upon those who were entrusted with the different departments of government.

We meet next with the arrival and the marriage of the Duke of Holstein, which leads us, I do not well know how, to the disgrace of Lestoc and Bestouchef. *Mons. L'Abbé*, all such courts, from whence intriguing minds are not removed with as much care as firmness, will be subject to the same vicissitudes as those you give an example of in the court of Russia; though such, however, hardly happen there once in twenty years. They are more frequent in France, but very likely less talked of, because attended with less ceremony. The *Abbé* adds, "The Russian court appeared outwardly more quiet for a long time;

time ; but inwardly, envy, jealousy, and mistrust, kept this vast palace in agitation." *Mons. Chappe*, you had better have been silent on that head, as it renews in our memories some intrigues that do no great honour to France—God preserve us for the future from such incendiaries!

At the end of this *Mons. Chappe* makes mention of the Empress Catharine the Second, then Great Duchess : he says, " Amidst the commotions of the court, she contrived to live in a state of tranquillity, and to cultivate the arts and sciences." Never was a situation more difficult than that of this Princess, at that time so critically placed between the Empress, the grand Duke her husband, their favourites, and the nation : she was esteemed by all, feared by some, loved by others : the goodness of her heart, the justness of her judgment, and the cultivated state of her mind, not only enabled her to support her situation without murmuring, but also kept her in the safest path. During the Empress's life she never discontinued giving the grand Duke the most sensible advice, till she saw it was useless to him, and hurtful to herself : there were then but two ways open to her ; either to share the misfortunes of her husband, who hated her, who was incapable of following her good advice, and was himself his greatest enemy ; or else, to save the empire from such a prospect of calamity, to rescue the grand Duke her son, then seven years old, and to provide

provide for her own safety. In this situation Catharine did not hesitate: she resolved to save this empire, whose hopes centered in her. The *Abbé* says, "Peter the Third ascended a tottering throne, of which he would perhaps have been for ever deprived, had the Empress lived seven or eight days longer." This Prince, at the death of the Empress Elizabeth, whose declared successor he had been for a space of twenty years, ascended the throne, not tottering as the *Abbé* represents it, but without the least opposition. Why *Mons. Chappe* chooses to add, "Of which he would perhaps have been deprived for ever, had the Empress lived seven or eight days longer," I cannot find out, unless he is fond of supposing what he wishes; and perhaps it would have proved rather agreeable to him to have it so, as new troubles would have afforded more room for the display of his malice.

The *Abbé* goes on: "At the instant of his (Peter the Third's) accession to the empire, some orders, not rightly understood, excited commotions, which seemed to portend that revolution which was expected by every one." This is totally destitute of foundation: *Mons. Chappe* must indeed have been blinded by prejudice, if he really thought he was relating facts, in this, as well as fifty other instances: we must alledge the same blindness as an excuse for those foreigners, "who (the *Abbé* says) placed their fortunes in
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the hands of the ministers of their respective courts," if it be really true they did so, and do suppose it a misfortune common to those who visit our empire. Our author continues, "But Mr. Glebow, a Russian, had been bold enough to give some advice to Peter the Third, during the illness of the Empress." It is not very likely, *Abbé*, that the acknowledged successor should be in want of advisers, at the moment his predecessor was at the point of death: one must be but little acquainted with human nature to suppose it; so that Glebow was certainly not the only one who offered advice at that moment. Were I to name you all those who undertook to be Peter's counsellors that day, I should fill whole pages with their names: it remained in the Prince's breast to choose among them; and Mr. Glebow had no more share in it than many others.

The *Abbé* says, "At the instant of her death Peter commands, and is acknowledged Emperor." A mighty wonder indeed! twenty years ago the oath of allegiance taken to the Empress Elizabeth, acknowledged her nephew, the grand Duke, her successor. It is very astonishing, to be sure, that at the instant of her death he should command, and be acknowledged Emperor. Is it not the same in France, *Mons. d'Auvergne*? The moment the breath is out of your King's body, the Dauphin "commands, and is acknowledged."

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The next sentence is worthy of notice: "The Empress his wife came and fell at his feet, and, striking her head against the ground, paid him homage as the first of his slaves." Does this answer the description you have just given us of the Empress, *Abbé*? After what you have said of her, can we think it possible she should introduce such a ceremony?—to what end? Take a piece of advice from me, *Mons. Chappe*; do not always give such free scope to your imagination; it is not at all times so peculiarly happy as you have found it in some few instances. Let us now see whether the *Abbé* could have any ground to go upon, for what he here tells us, and in what place the Empress could have "prostrated herself like the first of his slaves." At the moment that the Empress Elizabeth was dying, Peter the Third and his Princess were at her bed-side: it could not be there that she fell at his feet. As soon as the four physicians, who were in the room, declared that the Empress was dead, the doors of the anti-chamber were thrown open; the members of the senate and the whole court came in; there was not a creature there that did not shew the deepest affliction; nothing but sobs were heard. The Emperor retired: the Empress Catharine had agreed with him, that she would stay in the apartments with the corpse, till he went to the chapel. During all this time there was no idea of prostrating

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herself at his feet. She gave such exact orders, that in less than two hours time all the town could be admitted into the apartments where the late Empress was laid in state. The Emperor then sent her word to come into the chapel, where she still neither fell at his feet, nor struck her head against the ground, nor paid him homage: she was there merely as a spectatress of the oaths of allegiance taken to the Emperor, and as an assistant in the prayers, &c. All these facts are well known, and no body ever heard them related in any other manner, till *Mons. Chappe* took that trouble: but supposing it really had been as the *Abbé* says, what did it signify whether the etiquette, which is always absurd, obliged her to kneel upon one or both knees, or to bow her body to the ground, and touch the floor with her forehead? Are not your kings, *Abbé*, on the day of their coronation, extended at their length upon the ground in the middle of the cathedral church at Rheims? You do not see any thing extraordinary in that; no more do I. There is not a person of the meanest capacity, that could possibly suspect that the intention of this could be to declare himself the slave of the servants of the altar. Might not the Empress then as well (if the etiquette had prescribed it to her) have prostrated herself, and paid homage to the Emperor, without declaring herself his first slave?

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But, as I said before, the truth is, that it was not done, nor ever thought of.

Let us return to our author: he says, "All his (the Emperor's) subjects also took the oath of allegiance, and he enjoyed the empire in peace." How does this agree with what we observed he advanced a few lines higher? "At the instant of his accession to the empire, some orders, not rightly understood, excited commotions which seemed to portend a revolution expected by every body:" and now "he enjoyed the empire in peace!" Would it be a hasty judgment, if I was to say the *Abbé's* only view seems to be to get his pages filled? Contradictions and absurdities he leaves his readers to unravel if they can: and were he desired to explain several passages that have greatly puzzled me, the same come-off that was made use of by an acquaintance of mine, who wrote a most illegible hand, and upon a correspondent's returning him one of his own letters to decypher, (as time and patience had been exhausted in vain, to make any thing out of it) he, in a rage, made answer, That he had performed his task in writing it; it was theirs to read and comprehend it if they could—I mean an evasion of this kind, would be of infinite service to the *Abbé*. He relates the return of Biron, Munich, and Lestoc, to Petersburg; the removal of the Emperor from one palace to

another, and the indecent manner in which this Prince gave himself up to pleasures and diversions.

The next paragraph contains these words :
“ About a month after his accession to the throne, he went to the senate, and declared that he granted the privilege of freedom to the nobility.” An explanation of this will lead me into a digression, which I hope my reader will not be displeased with, as it will give me an opportunity of laying before him the real state of the Russian nobility, which has been misunderstood from a want of clearness in the edict of Peter the Third. It is singular that some courtiers should have advised the Emperor to grant the privilege of freedom to the nobility, as if they had not at all times enjoyed it: there was but one law (of Peter the Great) that any ways confined them; and that which gave rise to this law, is the strongest proof of their liberty: it is necessary to go a good way back to explain this matter. There were, time out of mind, in Russia two tenures of land; the one hereditary, and belonging solely to the nobility; the other fiefs, with which the crown rewarded military services: the lords of these fiefs were so exceedingly jealous of their nobility, that there was a necessity of giving them place in the army according to the rank of their ancestors: the least hesitation or difficulty in this affair immediately brought forth a petition to the sovereign, who was then obliged

obliged to give orders for an examination of their genealogy; and if this examination did not decide the thing in the manner the noble chose it should, he would not go to war; and his vassals staid at home with him: but in an urgent necessity, when their service was indispensibly requisite, the sovereign could obviate these difficulties about seniority, by sending them an order for joining the army, accompanied with letters of *Salvo Prejudicio* (saving their right) as to the seniority. This explanation proves several points: the first, that our nobility is very antient: secondly, that they were as careful and solicitous about their parchments as any nobility whatever: thirdly, that the sovereign is not so arbitrary as *Mons. Chappe* has given us to understand in many parts of his book, since every noble had it in his power to represent, with as much freedom as energy, the wrongs done him, and demand justice: many of these petitions have been kept among family papers, as well as in the public records, which will prove my assertion: fourthly, that a noble was so much his own master, as to have it in his power to stay at his estate, when he was dissatisfied, or thought he had been wronged: and fifthly, those letters of *Salvo Prejudicio* shew a government careful of preserving the established forms, and the rights of the nobility, for whom they were made. When in process of time the manner of

making war was changed, and regular corps of troops were established, the nobility, wedded to their antient customs, which this regular service entirely abrogated, retired to their estates, and none of them would engage in the wars. In the reign of Peter the Great, this was carried to such a length, that after the battle of Narva, in a time of public distress, there was a necessity for making a severe law to oblige them to military service. This law was preceded by another, to prevent the poor nobility from entering into the service of the rich. The law to oblige them to serve, was modified and altered a few years after, and the manifest inefficacy of it, as well as the evil of it, both to the estates and their proprietors, was soon very visible: and this was what Peter the Third meant to redress; but, by an unaccountable mistake, they were only declared *free*, without the addition of, *to serve or not to serve, as they thought proper*. In consequence of this, the *Abbé* has thought himself authorized to call them slaves; though, had he gone a little deeper than the surface of things, he could not have avoided seeing how strangely one thing had been taken for another: this law of Peter the Great, by which the nobility was held to service, was in direct contradiction to several other edicts made both before and after it; and farther proves what I have advanced. The very manner in which Peter the Third's edict is worded,

worded, shews that the nobility were free, and that this law was the only restraint they lay under. By way of note the *Abbé* gives a translation of this edict,* which is by no means exact, although published *avec approbation*; but it is still sufficiently so, to confirm what I have been saying.

Our author next informs us, that there was upon this occasion a public talk of erecting a statue of massy gold to the Emperor: he adds, "But some body observing, that there was not gold enough in the whole empire for such a purpose, the justness of the reflection determined the Russians to confine themselves to a statue one foot high, which was to be placed in the senate house. A statue of bronze was soon after substituted in the place of this; and at length the nation seemed resolved to have one of marble." This determination, as *Mons. Chappe* pleases to call it, in all probability founded upon the coffee-house conversation of some officers pleased with the prospect of returning to their estates, which by their absence had nearly run to ruin--this, I say, is evidently placed here to give him an opportunity of making the remark he is delighted with, viz, "That there was not gold enough in the whole empire for such a purpose." I will charitably suppose, *Abbé*, you are unacquainted with

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* The English translator of *Mons. Chappe* has omitted this edict entirely.

with the riches of our mines ; you would otherwise have known we are more able, than many other nations I could name, to answer such an expence, and without any damage to our circulation.

The *Abbé* continues, " It was necessary however that the Emperor should publish an edict in order to confirm this grant of freedom to his people ; so that, in consequence of the representations of some officers of state, Peter the Third limited the freedom granted to the nobility, to the permission of not serving in the army, and being allowed to travel with his consent." I have already said the matter in question was not to grant freedom where there was no slavery, but merely to abolish a law which required some service of the nobility. The precipitate manner in which the government had proceeded in consequence of this revolution, gave rise to the mistake I have just been clearing up. As it was however known that a written law could only be annulled by another of the same nature, the drawing up of this edict was no sooner taken in hand, than it appeared plain there was no necessity for any grant of freedom : the only thing requisite was the annulling the law which obliged them to constant service ; and this is what the edict contains. The *Abbé* tells us, " In consequence of this edict a Russian officer, desirous of quitting the service, applied to the Emperor for leave : the Emperor asked, What is your rank ? That of captain, replied the officer.

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Well then, said the Emperor, I make you a lieutenant, and you shall still serve; and he really served as lieutenant." Where the *Abbé* can have picked up this absurd story, I know not; but it is absolutely contrary to every thing, either of custom, or military regulation in the country. In the first place an officer, who wants leave to quit the service, does not ask it of the sovereign, but of the war-office; which gives him his dismissal, with a step higher than the rank in which he stood, provided he had served in it for a year. A captain degraded to a lieutenant for having asked his dismissal, would be a thing devoid of reason and precedent, and create such disgust in the army as to cause a mutiny. However singular the character and conduct of this prince may have been, this circumstance neither I, his cotemporary, nor any one I know, ever heard of.

The *Abbé* says, "Part of the nation however was pleased with the Emperor's familiarity; but his public and private conduct were both equally displeasing to the more sensible part of the people. Thus entirely absorbed in his pleasures, a sudden revolution removed him from the throne, and placed the Empress upon it in his stead." If it be true that this Prince's familiarity captivated the hearts of part of the nation, there cannot be a stronger proof of the inclination that naturally leads our nation to love its sovereign: but the truth of the case is, that the Emperor was unhappily

unhappily surrounded with courtiers, weak or designing enough to inspire him with a hatred for his nation, which he took no sort of pains to conceal. To hate is not the means of gaining affection. His want of prudence and conduct lost him the public esteem and confidence: his incapacity brought on his ruin. It was evident that the destruction of the empire must be the end of a reign, during the whole course of which, reason and justice were banished the sovereign's presence, where the very name of Patriot was a crime. Every state under the like circumstances must look to a revolution as the only means of preservation. Ours happened the 28th of June, 1762; and never did an event fall out more happily to save an empire from the inevitable ruin it was threatened with.

The *Abbé* here repeats, for the third time, a circumstance that constantly displeases him, and which he would willingly find fault with if he knew how: it is this, that the instant our sovereigns are upon the throne, they meet with the most perfect obedience: he adds, "From that moment the lives and fortunes of the subjects depended on the sole will of that Princess: they never appeared before her but prostrate, and swearing the most faithful allegiance to her, as to the sovereigns her predecessors." This paragraph claims a little of my time: the beginning of it, "From that moment the lives and fortunes
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of the subjects depended on the sole will of that Princess," is an allegation entirely destitute of foundation. Do not you know, *Abbé*, that for very many years our sovereigns have not condemned any guilty person to death, without their having first stood their trial, and having sentence passed upon them; and that they have since said, written, and repeated, that they only reserved to themselves the confirmation of the sentence of death, that it might never be carried into execution; that, as to the confiscation of the fortunes and estates of the subject, it is never heard of, not even for capital crimes; and that although the will of our sovereign, like that of many sovereigns in Europe, might be sufficient to dispose of the life and fortune of the subject, still there is no country where the subjects life and fortune have more forms provided to secure them? We have a law which says, It is better to release ten guilty persons than to punish one innocent. The next thing is, "They never appeared before her but prostrate, and swearing the most faithful allegiance to her, as to the sovereigns her predecessors." Must one not from thence imagine the court of Russia like those engravings of the audiences given by the Princes of Indostan, where the circle of courtiers are laid upon the ground flat upon their faces? we must at least suppose them creeping upon all fours. And still this is not sufficient:

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he adds, "And swearing the most faithful allegiance to her." What! every time they are admitted into her presence? And they did so "to the sovereigns her predecessors." Why, *Abbé*, who in the world will give credit to this tale? Are you the only person that ever was at Petersburg? I never in my life saw any body creep upon all-fours in the Empress's presence, nor swear allegiance to her, any where but in the chapel. At least, *Abbé*, when you attempt another story of this kind, give it some appearance of probability. When they are prostrate, *Abbé*, do they raise their head to swear, or do they swear with their face flat upon the ground? As I never was present at this ceremony, I should wish to see its circumstances adjusted by you.

Mons. Chappe continues, "As soon as the sovereign is on the throne, he is supposed to have no more relations; and no one dares to claim any degree of consanguinity with the royal family. A foreign courtier, having heard that the Countess of Worontzow was related to the Empress Elizabeth, went immediately and complimented her upon the news, which he considered as a discovery of political importance: she turned pale, and told him he was mistaken." Let us understand each other, *Abbé*: you say, "As soon as the sovereign is on the throne, he is supposed to have no more relations; and no one dares to claim any degree of consanguinity with the

royal family." Is this a law? is it a custom? or is it your arbitrary pleasure that has established this rule, *Abbé*? What you call the royal family in France, is no other than the reigning family; the collateral princes of the male issue are named Princes of the Blood. No body ever thought of reckoning among the princes of the blood, the fathers, brothers, &c. of the Queen of France, of the Dauphiness, &c. the royal family never sees its nearest relations of the womens side, but in private, to avoid all disputes of precedency. And let us now return to Russia: you have yourself already said, that "from the year 861, and during the space of more than seven hundred years, Russia has been governed by a filial succession of the same family without any disputes upon the accessions, either with brothers, or with subjects." Here then a reigning family is acknowledged: the relations in a direct line always composed the imperial family: the collateral kindred were portioned out with considerable estates or settlements, and were treated as princes of the blood. Prince George, brother to the Czar Ivan Wafiliewitsch, Prince Wolodomir Andriewitz, cousin german to the Czar, and Prince Demetrius, his youngest brother, were all three thus portioned out, and were the last of this family that received any, because it was extinct in the person of the Czar Feodor Ivanowitsch: and, what is more, Russia has suffered greatly, as
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well as France, from the troubles occasioned by giving too great incomes to the princes of the blood. Here then the princes of the blood are established and provided for. I shall now agree with *Mons. Chappe*, "that no one dares to claim any relationship with the royal family," if he will only let me add those words to his sentence, "that do not belong to it." Such would be the relations of the wives of those princes so portioned out and provided with settlements: but in this our customs are conformable to those of the rest of Europe; and thus it becomes not so very surprizing, that when (as the *Abbé* relates) a foreign courtier giddily complimented Countess Worontzow upon his political discovery (as *Mons. Chappe* calls it) of her being daughter to the brother of the Empress Catharine the First, and consequently as being part of the royal family, she was ashamed of his ignorance, and told him he was mistaken. What the *Abbé* advances about no one's daring to claim a relationship with the imperial family, is so wide from the truth, that I could name a hundred instances which prove the contrary; not only of their having particular distinctions and favours shewn them, but of the sovereigns acknowledging and calling them their relations: there are letters of the Czar Feodor Ivanowitz to Queen Elizabeth of England, in which this Prince names the Boyard Boris Goudanow, his brother-in-law: there are letters

letters of Peter the First to Queen Anne of England, in which he recommends to her, as his nearest relations, his cousins german, Messrs. de Narishkin, who were then travelling in England.

Mons. Chappe's next paragraph tells us, "It was forbidden, on pain of death, to keep any coin stamped with the image of the young Ivan."

Mons. L'Abbé, it was enjoined that the money which bore this stamp should be returned to the mint: it is then not very surprizing that care was taken to see the edict put in execution: perhaps you may be accustomed to the contrary. The *Abbé* continues, "The people dare not play with roubles which bear the impresson of the sovereign." Can one imagine that a person should sit down to talk of *every thing*, without having seen *any thing*? I will appeal to all those that have ever been in Russia, *Abbé*, whether they play or not, whether with or without money; whether gaming has not been carried to such an excess, that very severe edicts were of necessity published against it: notwithstanding this, there is not a tavern, or a coffee-house, where roubles do not roll both upon and under the table; nor does any body ever hear of such a thing as a person punished for playing with roubles: there have been people punished for playing at games of hazard, in opposition to the severe edicts against them. Possibly *Mons. Chappe* has mistaken

mistaken the one for the other. You need go no farther, *Abbé*, than your own countrymen, who keep taverns in Russia, for information with regard to this particular.

Our author says, "One cannot pass before the palace, facing the Emperor's apartments, without pulling off one's hat, or letting down the glass if in a carriage; otherwise one is exposed to insults from the soldiers." Well, reader, come to Petersburg, and you will see there is not a word of truth in this: but supposing it was, has not every country its customs with regard to etiquette; and is it worth while to entertain the academy with such trifles?

But let us go on: our *Abbé* is now got into a field he does not willingly quit: the *minutiae* are his peculiar delight. He says, "Any person, who should write the name of the Empress in small characters upon a letter, would be liable to be severely punished for it:" and immediately after, "These trifling circumstances are mentioned merely to give an idea of the extent of the absolute power of Russian monarchs." I cannot believe *Mons. Chappe* to be serious in this conclusion. From a nonsensical tale told him, he draws the serious inference of the despotism of our monarchs; and it therefore becomes necessary I should also trespass upon my reader's patience, by giving him this tale as it was told the *Abbé*, that he may ascertain the ground our author chooses to

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go upon in his general observations. A clerk of one of our offices was pulling an under-clerk by the ears, for having written in small letters a name, which, according to the rules of his art, should have been in capitals, when an ill-natured man, (who owed a grudge to the under-clerk for having some time before demanded some spices of him, which he was not willing to give) in passing by and hearing the cries of the poor clerk, laid hold of this opportunity to gratify his resentment against this demander of spices, and with that view took away with him the paper in question, in order to call the poor clerk before a judge, and accuse him of want of respect to the sovereign: upon the enquiry into the subject matter, this intermedler produced the paper: the judge laughed; but, as some sort of form must be observed in all accusations, the judge was obliged to examine how it had happened to be so done, and upon clearing up the case, the clerk was sent back, with an admonition to mind the rules of his art better for the future, and the intermedler, with a strong reprimand for his ill-nature. And from this tale, probably put down in the *Abbé's* memorandums in great letters, he makes the profound and learned reflection, that "These trifling circumstances are mentioned merely to give an idea of the extent of the absolute power of Russian monarchs." Do you

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think the proof so clear as the *Abbé* hopes to make it, good reader?

He goes on: "The nobility never approach the throne but with fear and trembling: they are banished into Siberia for the slightest political intrigue; and their possessions being confiscated, one whole family thus falls a victim to the artful insinuations of a courtier." The slight political intrigue rewarded by exile into Siberia, we have possibly in common with some other nations, who indeed have no Siberia; but every place of exile becomes a Siberia, *Abbé*. On the other hand, I positively must deny the confiscations or forfeitures for the slightest offences by intrigue: these confiscations have never subsisted among us, but by special decree, as one of the greatest punishments. Since the reign of the Empress Catharine the Second, we have almost forgot the very meaning of the word: she has even not allowed of it in the most heinous offences, for which it is prescribed by the laws. None are now sent into exile, but malefactors; and court intrigues are kept under, merely by the contempt shewn to the intriguers.

The *Abbé* next tells us, "When I was at Petersburg, I was one day on a visit at the house of a foreigner, who was in office there: being desirous of information, I asked whether the Prince Ivan was living or not: it was immediately whispered in my ear, that in Russia no one spoke

spoke of that prince: there were, however, no more than three Frenchmen in the room, and it was upwards of thirty feet square." This was a particular case: in 1762, when the *Abbé* passed through Petersburg, three French adventurers, servants in one of the first families in Russia, in hopes of a very great reward, had become informers of some discourse against the government, held in the house where they served: this fact was made public; and it is possible that the master of the house our *Abbé* was upon a visit to, knew the story, and did not entertain a very high opinion of the two Frenchmen, who *Mons. Chappe* says were in the room; consequently did not care to run the risk of having his words misinterpreted, and put off the *Abbé* by whispering in his ear the words he tells us.

The author continues, "On the eve of the death of the Empress Elizabeth, no one dared to make any enquiry about her health; and after her decease, though it was universally known, yet every body was afraid to speak of it." It was publicly known, *Abbé*, when she was at the point of death: she had received the extreme unction in presence of the whole court; and the moment she died, it was declared, and the doors of the anti-chamber were opened to let in those who came to pay their compliments to her successor. How then could every body be afraid to speak of her death? It would be far more

likely to suppose, that the new government would have taken it very ill that any body had doubted the Empress's death.

Mons. Chappe says, "The mutual distrust in which people live in Russia, and the total silence of the nation upon every thing which may have the least relation either to government, or to the sovereign, arise chiefly from the privilege every Russian has, without distinction, of crying out in public, *Slovo i delo* ; that is to say, "I declare you guilty of treason, both in words and actions." All the by-standers are then obliged to assist in taking up the person accused: a father arrests his son, and the son his father; and nature suffers in silence: the accuser and accused are both conveyed immediately to prison, and afterwards to St. Petersburg, where they are tried by the secret committee of chancery." Let me now give what I have to say upon this paragraph. First, the having recourse to the sovereign by the words *Slovo i delo*, as the *Abbé* says, was brought in with part of the Roman laws, under the Roman emperors: custom, afterwards become law, allowed the oppressed to have recourse to the Emperor, or elsewhere in his name; by which means they claimed his protection, and then the judge was obliged to submit to the Emperor's decision. This custom degenerated into abuse: every accused person claimed the Emperor's decision; delations and false accusations followed; the troubles

troubles of the times gave room to them; actions, and, for want of them, words furnished the matter. This abuse became at last so glaring, so useless, and so insupportable to the inhabitants, the state, and the sovereign, that this hurtful custom was totally abolished; and an edict was published, to declare, that the words *slowo i delo* were to be of no signification; and that the secret committee, which took cognizance of it, was also abolished. As all this happened long before the *Abbé's* visit to Russia, this whole paragraph of his was surely very useless. Secondly, in whatever light the *Abbé* may choose to represent things, it is very certain, that by the Russian laws, not only near relations, such as father, mother, children, brothers, sisters, &c. cannot be witnesses either for or against each other; but a relation in any degree whatever is excluded as a witness in matters of any importance: besides this, the testimony even of servants is only allowable, when it serves either to confirm or refute what other witnesses have declared for or against the person accused. It was in the year 1213, that the town of Nowgorod, in its capitulation with the Grand Dukes of Russia, inserted the clause, that a servant's denunciation of his master should be no ways valid. Observe, reader, that at that time the dominion of Nowgorod extended from Plesko to Twer, and from Carelia and the lake Ladoga, to Smolensk and the Ukraina. This

capitulation was renewed at the beginning of every reign, to that of the Czar Ivan Wafiliewitsch, when this clause was inserted among the laws of Russia which were then ~~form~~ed into a code.

The *Abbé* gives a minute detail of the secret committee; from which you would suppose, reader, he was thoroughly acquainted with all its forms, though neither he, nor any one else, ever saw or heard the judgments of this tribunal, which always proceeded in the most secret manner; and it was its secrecy made it so much dreaded. It is astonishing how positively the *Abbé* ventures to assert things which it is morally impossible he should know: he has not yet done with the secret committee: he always expatiates as much as possible upon unfavourable things: he says, "This court of judicature has been established merely, that tyranny might enjoy the privilege of sacrificing all such persons as have become the object of despotic jealousy." This again is one of those reflections destitute even of the slightest foundation. No such abominable motives, *Abbé*, have given rise to this tribunal: the troubles at the end of the last century made it necessary: with the end of these troubles the secret committee became useless; but it still subsisted, because in every state, a tribunal once thought useful, can by time alone be proved to be useless. To the sentence above mentioned the *Abbé* adds, "It was therefore necessary that the crime of the false
accuser

accuser should not be punished with death, and the punishment of the *knout* was always made milder in his favour." I have already said, and I do maintain, that no false accuser ever was released by the secret committee without having undergone an exemplary punishment; but, unluckily, it has not always been inflicted publicly. Was *Monf. Chappe* less designing, or less blinded by prejudice, he would not have omitted mentioning that the severest sentences prescribed by the laws, are generally modified by the sovereign, when laid before him, as the judgments of this tribunal always were.

Monf. Chappe says, "The nobility, thus bowing under the yoke of the most dreadful slavery, do not fail to retaliate upon the people." This is not the first time, by many, the *Abbé* has taxed us with bowing under the yoke of the most dreadful slavery; but he has never yet been at the trouble of explaining in what this slavery consists: in general, however, an academician proves the proposition he advances, when he wishes people to be convinced by his assertions. How to do this, I fancy, would be *Monf. Chappe's* difficulty. An oppressive law, already abolished, which existed but a moment; which had been softened in its very first exertion, and often evaded and deemed an abuse; against which, while it existed, the government had provided precautions, restrictions, and punishments, clearly to be

found in all the laws printed and published, will furnish no satisfactory proofs of the yoke he fastens upon their necks. The law, upon which the *Abbé* takes upon him to make slaves of the Russian nobles, is that by which Peter the Great obliged them to serve; and the abuse, that of crying out, *Slavo i delo*. During whole centuries the governments of some countries in Europe have been employed in diminishing the authority of their too powerful nobles. Am I thence to conclude, *Abbé*, that in those countries, where the plan has been attended with success, they have been forced to bow their necks to the yoke of the most dreadful slavery, because the governments had carried through what they had undertaken? You are ignorant, *Abbé*, of every circumstance that regards the country you give an account of, and do not reflect, that those, into whose hands your book falls, may be better instructed than yourself, and as willing as able to contradict you. What will you say, if I prove to you, from the most undoubted authority, not only that Russian nobles neither were nor are slaves, but that they enjoy rights and privileges which few of their equals in other countries can boast of? I shall draw my proofs from the laws and records of above five hundred years. The laws which preceded those of the Czar Ivan Wafiliewitsch, established a decision by single combat (elsewhere called Battel, and the Judgment of

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of God) in such cases where no sufficient proof could be produced for the deciding of a cause any other way : a noble was to fight only with a noble. The particulars of these combats are found very frequently in the records, and always with distinctions for the nobility : they formed into bodies in the provinces ; and there are petitions to be seen in the records, in which it is said, *the body of nobles* of such a province complain ; or desire some particular thing to be granted. The preface to the laws drawn up by the Czar Alexis Michaelowitz, which are still in use, shews that Czar demanded deputies from the nobility of the provinces to help him to compose the code. The Czar Ivan Wafiliewitsch had done the same. The nobility of the province of Moscow can only be judged in that capital. Our laws forbid a noble's being put to the torture ; and no sentence of death, passed upon a noble, can be put into execution without being confirmed by the sovereign. Every noble has the right of making a will, and these wills were exceedingly respected ; I have seen some of them five hundred years old. There are contracts extant, between such a noble and such a sovereign of Russia, for exchanges of lands : some of them contain, on the side of the noble, a simple assurance of fidelity, with a promise not to engage in any service against the sovereign, or leave the kingdom without his permission : and, on the sovereign's
part,

part, all sorts of favours are promised. These contracts are to be found in the records of Moscow; and are most evident proofs, that the Russian nobility never were slaves: and, what is more, till the reign of the Czar Feodor Ivanowitsch, there was no such thing known as a bondman in Russia: the labourers did not belong to the estates—the servants served by contract—there was a tribunal of police erected specially to take cognizance of these contracts. It was Feodor Ivanowitz who thought it better to fix the labourer to the land, because Russia being at that time less populous than at present, those who did not choose to work, retired into uninhabited places, and lived there as they pleased; which was the cause of rapine, highway robberies, and excesses of all sorts: the fixing the labourer to the land, and obliging him to belong to the master of it, obviated this great inconveniency. Do not let the *Abbé's* partiality to the word Slave engage you, good reader, to believe that our people's being bondmen reduces them to the state of real slavery. I have before mentioned, that the peasants belonging to the empire, to the court, and to the convents, have a fixed and moderate tax to pay, which, when paid, leaves them masters of whatever they may earn: most of the estates belonging to the nobles are ruled in the same manner; and it may in general be said, not only that the life of the common people in Russia is

no worse than that of the common people elsewhere, but even that it is better. We have had instances of certain families having intended to sell their land to pay their debts; where the peasants in the villages belonging to them, upon hearing of it, have brought together all the money they had laid up, and paid the lord of the manor's debts, upon condition he should not sell his estate. A noble has no other right of justice upon his own land than the interior polity: the high jurisdiction belongs to the tribunal of the voivode of the province.

I left the *Abbé* at the paragraph where he says, "The nobility, thus bowing under the yoke of the most dreadful slavery, do not fail to retaliate upon the inferior class: the people are slaves to them, to the sovereign, or to the voivodes who represent him." Let us now see whether the chain of the voivodes is as heavy as that the *Abbé* so generously lays on the neck of the nobility, and hands down from them to the people. Were we to compare every Russian individual with his equal in many other countries, we should easily prove that he is less confined, and less oppressed; that nothing but manifest infractions of the laws are punished by government; and that those laws, though numerous, and in some cases contradictory, are still less so than the laws in some countries I could name; where they are mostly written in a language unknown to the multitude, and put together

together by twenty different authorities, in times of ignorance and superstition. The voivodes of the provinces, whom the *Abbé* is so much incensed at, are not in any degree representatives of the sovereign; they have no other authority but that of attending to complaints, or law suits, which are brought before them: every village pays its taxes into the the voivode's chest, and he never has any thing to do with them unless that be neglected. Bribery is under severe penalty forbidden, and the voivode can lay no taxes upon any body; nor can he do any one thing without the consent of his assessors.

The *Abbé* says, "The lords levy what tax they please upon their slaves, and sometimes seize upon the small fortunes they may have acquired by their industry." I imagined that in all countries the proprietors had the right of imposing such taxes upon their estates, as would prove most suitable to their economy; and that, when they laid them on too high, they ruined themselves by ruining their estates: but as *Monf. Chappe* seems surpris'd this should be the custom in Russia, I suppose in France the proprietors of land are tied up by some law with regard to this. In Russia there are very rich individuals among the vassals of the nobility; which proves their masters do not take from them the fortune they may have acquired "by their industry," when the taxes were paid. A peasant who can pay a certain sum
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of money may get himself received burghers in a town, and then his master can exact no more from him than the single tax as peasant: he may also, with his master's consent, buy his freedom for a sum of money.

Mons. Chappe goes on: "The lords sell their slaves as cattle are sold in other parts of the world." When a noble sells his estate, he generally sells with it the peasants that cultivate it: that, I believe, may also be the same in other parts of Europe. In many cases the sale of subjects is forbidden by the laws. The author adds, "They choose out among them the number they want as servants, and treat them with great inhumanity." The way in which servants are treated in every part of Europe, depends upon the manners being more or less civilized in those parts. Surely no body can deny that ours become more polished every day.

The *Abbé* says, "They are not allowed a civil power of life and death over their servants, any more than over their other slaves; but, as they have the privilege of punishing them with the *padogi*, they have them chastised in such a manner, that they may be said in fact to have acquired the right of putting them to death." Things in the same strain might happen to servants all over Europe. *Cent coups de baton*, with which a French master in a fit of anger regales his servant, (even upon the stage) is as effectual as an equal dose
of

of *padogi*. Again let me tell you, *Abbé*, the good or bad treatment of servants always depends more upon the disposition of their master than the laws of the nation. There is now in Russia a great number of families, who think it inhuman to treat their servants harshly, and a *shame* to allow of corporal punishment, such as *padogi*, &c.

Monf. Chappe continues, "In weighty offences a lord ought, according to law, to bring his slave to be tried before an ordinary court of justice: and in 1761, the senate published an edict, whereby all the lords were allowed to send any slaves they were displeased with to work in the mines; but the lords then preferred, as they ever will, chastising them at home, rather than parting with them." Well, reader, notwithstanding what the *Abbé* says, ever since the publication of that edict, bad servants have either been sent to the mines, or as recruits into the army. The *Abbé* ends this chapter with the eulogium of the Empress Catharine the Second, in which he takes upon him to give her Majesty some advice about her government. I shall not take upon me to follow him through this paragraph.

Of the GREEK RELIGION.

I Shall not pursue the *Abbé* so closely in this part of his undertaking as I have done in the others, but content myself with taking up a passage here and there, as opportunity may offer: for instance, he says, "The synod is obliged to refer all important matters to the Czar in full senate, to which they go in a body, and take their seat below the senators:" and in a note he cites Strahlemberg's authority for this assertion; then adds, "According to Voltaire, the synod ranks with the senators:" but the *Abbé's* paragraph shews he holds the opinion of Strahlemberg. He is wrong however: our law brings the senate and the synod upon so perfect an equality, that in any case, which obliges these two tribunals to enter into conference together, the one sends to desire the other's assistance, and those of the tribunal in which the conference is held, give place to the other.

Speaking of the monks, the *Abbé* says, "They are to abstain from milk and eggs during Lent, as well as on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays, throughout the year." The abstinence on Mondays is voluntary; that on Wednesdays and Fridays is according to institution; but on the Saturday it is expressly enjoined to avoid having any
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thing in common with the Romish church, or the Jews.

I do not understand how the *Abbé* can say, "The Archimandrites are the only persons, among the superior clergy, who live in communities, which are all subject to the archbishops and bishops." None but the bishops who have seats in the synod, ever reside out of their bishopricks; the others hardly ever quit their diocese, any more than the abbots (in Russian *Archimandrites*) leave their communities: such of those communities, which depend entirely upon the synod, bear the Greek name of *Stawropigia Monastir*; so that the *Abbé* is again mistaken, when he says, "They are *all* subject to the archbishops and bishops."

Monf. Chappe tells us, "The Russian clergy are ignorant, drunken, and debauched: the bishops and priests are less guilty of irregularities: the former, on account of their years; the latter, because their wives teach them moderation betimes, though they have not the same power as to drinking. They make their wine of plants, a few drugs, and some brandy: they have beer and a sort of mead, the basis of which is the fluid oozing from the birch-tree at the beginning of the summer: their favourite drink is brandy, and another liquor they call *crematum*, which is so strong, that the first time I drank of it I thought I had swallowed aqua-fortis: it produced so violent a constriction in my mouth, that I could
neither

neither speak, nor spit it out: I resolved from that time never to drink any more *crematum*." I own I did not expect to find a description of strong liquors under the head of the Greek Religion, which title the *Abbé* has thought proper to prefix to this part of his work: he has employed less paper to explain the tenets of the religion they profess, than to account for the liquors they drink: and notwithstanding this, it is just as little to be trusted to, as the many other passages I have pointed out. Though *Monf. Chappe* chooses to say, "The Russian clergy are ignorant, drunken, and debauched;" I cannot think (were it even the case) that ours is singular in such respects. I very well remember the number of councils held by authority of the pope, for reforming the manners of the clergy, as well as all the rules laid down for that purpose: and upon an impartial examination, I am of opinion, it but little suits the *Abbé* to talk of the Russian clergy, who may be addicted to some faults, but must be infinitely less debauched than the French, because they are less rich, and are married. *As to drunkenness, I am convinced we have not a single priest to be compared with a canon in some rich abbey in Germany. *Monf. Chappe* himself says, "The bishops and priests are less addicted to such irregularity than the rest." Upon whom then does your charge fall, *Abbé*? Only upon the monks: these always confined, and by their profession

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obliged

obliged to be very cautious, whatever passes among them must be done very secretly. I do not well know how the *Abbé* came at his intelligence, if he had any. Did you not learn at the same time, *Monf. d'Auteroche*, that no abbot can receive a monk till he be fifty years of age? This is a fact; but you were willing to pass it over in silence, that it might not take off the strength of your assertion: on the other hand, the greatest part of our bishops, now alive, (1770) honour their profession, by their virtues, their knowledge, their lives, and their manners; and grace their pulpits by their eloquence and the purity of their doctrine. At the head of these I may place Benjamin bishop of Plesco; Gabriel bishop of Twer; and among the abbots, Plato, archimandrite of the convent of Troitza; all members of the synod, and Russians by birth: I could name many more, without any fear of contradiction, as living examples of the *Abbé's* disposition to calumny, biting like a viper whatever comes within its reach. I am almost ashamed, after this, to return to the refutation I have undertaken: I cannot however but go on with my task, were it only to shew how very contradictory and absurd all the *Abbé's* assertions are.

I am come to the account of the liquors: "They make up for this by drinking:—they make their wine of plants, a few drugs, and some brandy:—they have beer, and a sort of mead,

mead, the basis of which is the fluid oozing from the birch-tree in the beginning of the summer:—Their favourite drink is brandy, and another liquor they call *crematum*.” Good reader, if ever you travel into Russia, do not enquire of priest or layman for *crematum*; no one will be able to understand what it means: it is likely, that some body, in jest, may have given this nick-name to brandy, of which the *Abbé* has perhaps tasted: or, probably, the pleasure of laughing at *Mons. Chappe* has induced them to impose upon him, which, if we may trust to the echoes of Tobolsk, has more than once been the case: or perhaps also, to make themselves understood, they have named it *crematum* in Latin, supposing he knew the meaning of that. You are not aware, *Abbé*, how greatly this passage exposes you: the person who presented you with *vinum crematum*, at least knew how to name brandy in Latin, which you, though a learned academician, and abbot of the Latin church, did not understand. After this master-stroke of your own erudition, it suits you well to dwell upon the ignorance of others.

The next paragraph offers the description of a cellar, which the prelate its owner pleasantly called a library: but *Mons. Chappe* does not know, that this Diogenes-like prelate is a Pole, not a Russian. *Mons. Chappe* says, “ I met with priests in company, and especially monks, so

drunk, that they were obliged to be carried away on a litter, decent people being put to the blush by their actions and discourses." God knows what kind of company the *Abbé* got into. It is not common in Russia for the clergy to mix with other company: in general they are differently employed, in fulfilling their duties, either in or out of the convents. There is no question but such company, out of which people are carried away upon litters, and where the actions and discourses put decent people to the blush, must indeed be very bad. I must conclude, *Abbé*, from this speech, you have been in some bad house with a couple of priests not better disposed than yourself; for it is impossible that in a reputable house, any body should be allowed to behave twice in this manner. I think you had better have been quiet upon this subject, *Abbé*: you are not always a gainer by your malice; it exposes you to some severe raps over the knuckles: but how can I help that?

At the bottom of the same page, the *Abbé* warns his reader not to judge of "all the Russian clergy by this disadvantageous representation of them: in the course of his journey he has met with clergymen of abilities, and of irreproachable manners." Then our academician sings the praises of the archbishop of Tobolsk, who, he says, "is an excellent example. This prelate had not indeed much knowledge besides what concerned his

his ministry ; but an enthusiasm, better directed, seemed only to be wanting to complete his character." A very fine model indeed the *Abbé* has pitched upon as an example ; ignorant, and an enthusiast. Is it such as those you choose to follow, *Monf. Chappe* ? This prelate was besides persecuting and haughty ; vices for which he was obliged to resign his bishoprick lately. Was it at his house you drank crematum, *Abbé* ?

He continues, " The Sorbonne proposed to the Czar, in 1717, a reunion of the Greek with the Romish church ; and every thing that passed upon this occasion is well known : if this society did not succeed in the attempt, they acquired at least so high a reputation among the clergy of Russia, that they imagine no man in France can be learned, unless he be a member of that illustrious body." Yes, *Abbé*, we are perfectly well acquainted with the Sorbonne ; it has distinguished itself by two interesting anecdotes : the first, as you say, in 1717, when it offered to Peter the First the means of submitting all Russia to the Pope : the second, when it so prudently condemned to the flames the *Belisarius* of *Monf. Marmontel*, in 1766. There is no doubt but that any man endowed with common sense must have a most profound veneration for that respectable body, which has more than once condemned on both sides of the question ; and which, over and above, was so openly against

Henry the Fourth, the best and greatest king you ever had. It is probable, that the number of those, who in Russia esteem the Sorbonne upon the footing the *Abbé* mentions, is not great: at least it is pretty plain, if they are not the most ignorant, they are the most misled among the nation, and little worth boasting of as the *Abbé* does. He goes on: "It would be very useful, if the esteem, in which this society is held in France, could be extended to those who give themselves up to the education of youth. The Russians have the greatest respect for their governors and teachers, and consider them as the fathers of their pupils. If education in Russia does not answer as it might be expected from such behaviour, it is because honour and virtue can only spring up in the soil of liberty." In the first place, I do not very well understand what the *Abbé* means by the beginning of this paragraph. If it be said only in regard to France, well and good, I have nothing to do with it: but if, as the continuation seems to imply, he wishes the Sorbonne to have the commission of training up governors for the tuition of our Russians, we shall readily dispense with the Sorbonne's taking that trouble. Every Russian who thinks, must acknowledge, that the very worst governor he can possibly choose for his children, must be one of those who are entrusted for that purpose either by the Sorbonne, or any other religious society
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of the Romish church, because there is more than a probability that their whole attention will be given to the conversion of their pupil; or at least that they will instill into them principles so directly opposite to the doctrine of the orthodox Greek church, as will cast a pernicious influence over all their actions, and must in time overturn the peace of the empire. The reflection at the end of the paragraph above mentioned cannot be passed unnoticed: "If education in Russia does not answer as it might be expected from such behaviour, it is because honour and virtue can only spring up in the soil of liberty." Here our sentence is once more pronounced: we are good for nothing, and cannot be made fit for any thing, whatever pains may be taken with us—and why? the decisive academician, philosophical *Abbé*, and great politician, has thus decreed it, and made the reason obvious, "Honour and virtue can only spring up in the soil of liberty." Who but a *Mons. Chappe* ever robbed us of our liberty! "The love of honour can only spring up in a soil of liberty." Are we not daily adding honour and glory to that with which Peter the Great has already covered us? But is it worth while arguing with the *Abbé*? he is determined not to be convinced of any one thing in our favour: he alone will, I flatter myself, remain so. No hatred, or ill-will, I think, ever came up to that which *Mons. Chappe* takes so much

pains to bestow upon us. It requires all the desire I have of rescuing my countrymen from the bad effects of it, to engage me to trespass thus upon my reader's patience, as well as my own, in unfolding such a collection of absurdity.

The *Abbé* says, "The nobility of Russia never enter into ecclesiastical orders." Formerly, however, scarce a nobleman or a sovereign with us died without first becoming a monk, any more than in other monastical countries: many gentlemen in former times took religious vows: there are some yet, but not so many as formerly. The late archbishop of Nowgorod, who died in 1767, was a nobleman. The greatest hindrance to the nobility taking vows, is, I think, the prohibition of any person's being received a monk till he be fifty: besides, a monastical life in Russia has few charms; the orders are very severe; nothing but an exemplary piety can make it desirable: the allowance of the monk is very trifling: it is true, that having hands to work, and leave to make use of them, their riches depend entirely upon themselves. Why will you say, *Abbé*, "that the ignorance and depravity of the Russian clergy is in the natural order of things?" Nothing but your bilious humour can make it appear so. An impartial comparison would, I give you my word, be greatly to the disadvantage of the French clergy.

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The author informs us, that "Peter the First abolished the dignity of patriarch." I must just beg leave to observe here, what I think gave rise to the power the patriarchs arrogated to themselves: the father of the Czar Michel Feodorowitz was patriarch, and was possessed of the most respectable qualifications: the father of the sovereign, and the dignity of the patriarch, were equally revered in him. His son, whose counsel and oracle he was, set the example: the patriarchs who came after him wanted to insist upon the same honours bestowed upon the father of the sovereign: thence all those disputes, which only ended by the entire abolishment of the dignity, and the erection of the synod. *Monf. Chappe* says, "The common people are bigoted even to fanaticism in favour of the Greek religion: this extravagance increases, the farther we get from the capital; but these very people are so little acquainted with their religion, that they are persuaded they fulfill all its duties by complying with some external ceremonies, and especially by keeping the Lent fasts with the greatest strictness: in other respects they give themselves up to debauchery, and to every kind of vice. Morality is less to be met with among the Russians, than among the Pagans their neighbours." Every word of this deserves a reprimand. In the first place, though there be no doubt of the people being attached to the Greek religion, yet no country

country offers fewer fanatics and enthusiasts than ours has done for these sixty years past. The capital in all countries sets the example: in ours neither fanatics nor enthusiasts are suffered there: they are looked upon as disordered in their minds. The governors of the provinces follow this lead, and prove the *Abbé's* mistake in saying, "This extravagance increases, the farther we get from the capital." In the second place, all religions, that have a great number of exterior ceremonies, are apt to mislead the simple, who mistake those for the essentials of the worship. It is probable, that in our country, as in others, there may be people more rigid in keeping Lent than in bridling their passions: but what country can you name me, *Mons. Chappe*, where so many millions of inhabitants are entirely free from vice? I am pretty well acquainted both with antient and modern history, and do not remember to have ever heard the mention of one: it is, however, very certain, that among great part of our common people, especially in the country, drunkenness is reckoned a very shameful excess; and a very great number of peasants are totally unacquainted with the taste of strong liquor. Add to this, that there is no country where the men are married so young as they generally are in Russia; and you will find, reader, that *Mons. Chappe's* dreadful accusation of all kind of excesses is greatly reduced: the morals of the common
people

people are very far from being so depraved as he represents them : our peasants are very hospitable, as I have before said ; and I here add, that the nation in general is so.

As a proof that we are not such bugbears as we are represented, I shall mention a custom I do not remember to have seen noticed in any of the histories of Russia : If several peasants are obliged to take a journey, to go a hunting, a fishing, or even only to market, they immediately join into a body ; the tradesmen do the same, and the military as commonly : they join purses, and fix upon one among them to be cashkeeper and purveyor : every week he gives an account of the money he has been entrusted with : if he has made the most of it, they continue him in his employment ; if not, another is chosen in his place : the one that acquits himself the best of this business, has a particular distinction shewn him in the little troop : in the morning, after every one has said his prayers, (a thing never neglected) the first salute is always to him—he is consulted upon all occasions—nothing is done without his consent—they make him a small allowance, and spare him all the trouble they can take from him. A striking instance of the good resulting from this custom, was after the battle of Zorndorff in the last war with the king of Prussia : the army was in want of provisions for ten days : the troops agreed, that provided they

they were paid their due at the end of those ten days, they would supply each other out of the savings of every little community: necessity occasioned this proposal to be accepted of with eagerness, and both parties faithfully kept their words.

In no country respect to parents and aged persons is more conspicuous than in ours; even married children will hardly stir out of the house without their parents leave. According to our laws, during a father's life, his children are in the most absolute dependence upon him. Surely nothing can speak more to the praise of a nation than their filial obedience: I could give you a hundred instances of the height it is carried to in Russia, *Abbé*, were I not afraid of spinning out my work to a tedious length.

We have whole provinces, *Mons. Chappe*, where public robberies are never heard of; and no place affords fewer examples of private theft. Were other nations to live in the same free manner as the Russians do, they certainly would not keep within the same bounds. There used to be no such thing as keys or double locks to outward doors; no one ever thought of locking them, and all were the more surprised when they found they had been robbed. The following anecdote I had from the respectable authority of the person himself, to whom it happened: He had, upon some account or other, the charge of commanding

a large town for a year. Every body said, there never were fewer robberies committed than during that time; and the commander was extolled to the skies for the order he had established. But how have you contrived, said one to him, to maintain the public security in this manner? I gave, replied he, but one order, which every body followed. I said, let every one keep their doors shut; which having been done, no robbery has been thought or heard of. After this, *Abbé*, say, "that good morals are less to be met with among the Russians, than among the Pagans their neighbours."

The author adds, "The opinions of the Russians with regard to christianity are so extraordinary, that it would seem as if that religion, so well adapted in itself to the happiness and good order of society, had only served to make this people more wicked:" and by way of proof to this assertion, the *Abbé* tells the story of a highway robber, who kept Lent strictly, but murdered travellers, and took pleasure in drinking their blood, and seeing the contortions of these unhappy sufferers. This story is so entirely in the taste of those told of spirits and ghosts, which every one hears, some believe, and none have ever seen, that it is not in the power of any one endowed with common sense to credit it; especially the cruelty of the assassin in drinking the blood. *Mons. Chappe* himself says, "This fact, scarcely credible,

credible, was told him by Russians." He thinks it incredible, reader, and yet he tells it: were he less prejudiced than he is with the idea of the melancholy and serious turn of the Russians, he could not have avoided seeing they were imposing upon his credulity at every step he took: but let us suppose for a moment, if one can suppose a thing so horrible, that the story be true, does any such single case give an authority to advance, "That it would seem as if that religion, so well adapted in itself to the happiness and good order of society, had only served to make this people more wicked?" I shall most readily agree with *Mons. d'Autechoche*, that we are neither perfectly good, nor absolutely bad: this kind of middling state is in the common course of nature, and exists in all nations; because man is pretty near the same, in what hemisphere he may draw breath. The author himself says of the story I have just mentioned, "Such examples are rarely to be met with in Russia. I have mentioned this only to show that in this country less attention has been given to form the manners of the people by religion, than to oblige them to observe certain ceremonies, which do not always improve the morals of mankind." He might have said, it is the only fact of the kind ever heard of: but how can the author expect, from one singular and doubtful fact, to prove, "that in this country less attention has been given to form

form the manners by religion, than to oblige them to observe certain ceremonies, which do not always improve the morals of mankind?" I positively deny it, *Abbé*; such never was the intention of our religion: if there are people who prefer the outward ceremonies, to the strict observance of its moral duties, a wrong head or a bad heart may produce the same in all countries and in all religions: it would be hard indeed to infer from one villain's fasting, yet murdering people, that the precepts of the religion tended more to the observance of ceremonies than avoiding murders. Had you taken care, *Abbé*, to get a little more instruction, as to the tenets of the religion you sat down to expatiate upon, you would not have laid yourself thus open to censure, and the charge of ignorance which I am obliged to bring against you at almost every page.

He still goes on: "There have been few sects of the Greek religion in Russia; and this may perhaps be owing to the ignorance of the clergy. The sect of the Razkolniki is the only one which has maintained itself to this day." When I find the author says, "There have been few sects of the Greek religion in Russia," I am greatly tempted to believe it is only for the sake of adding those words, "owing perhaps to the ignorance of the clergy:" to say that, "The Razkolniki is the only one which has maintained

maintained itself to this day," is just as proper as if I was to tell you, reader, that the heretics are the only sect of the Romish church who have maintained themselves to this day. The word *Razkolniki* means Schismatic or Heretic; and there are above fifty different sects in Russia, comprehended under the general name of *Razkolniki*. The *Abb.* does not even know the meaning of the words he makes use of; and I think we have found his knowledge of things pretty much upon an equality with that. He says, "These sectaries have neither priests nor churches: they hold their meetings in private houses." Some of them have neither priests nor churches: others have both, but do not admit of deacons: some differ only by the manner of crossing themselves, and the form of prayer: those are not separated from the established church. Those who have priests have also chapels in different parts of Russia, especially in the Ukraina, where the Empress Anne gave them fix hamlets as places of refuge; and these are called *Razkolnitschi Slobodi*, Schismatic Hamlets. There are other professions which differ entirely from the tenets of the Greek church: some do not admit of any sacrament: others run into different superstitions, that would be too many to enumerate: some have not always been peaceably inclined; they have often attempted preaching, and making proselytes in a tumultuous manner: they were persecuted for a while;

while; now they are tolerated and despised: some among them reckoned it a meritorious act to be burnt; for which they had two motives; the one, ostentation, when persecuted, in giving themselves up to the persecutors; the other, for the crown of martyrdom, when persuaded to do it themselves, and thus to make the sect the more spoken of: in general, the persuader is said to have acted upon different principles; for he used to run away with the cast-off clothes of the unhappy wretch whom the flames were consuming. Heretofore, when the court of justice belonging to the province was informed that any such act was going forward, they were accustomed to send a detachment of troops to prevent it, if possible; but this frequently only hastened the accomplishment of what they wanted to prevent. For these eight years past they have been allowed to burn themselves, and do as they please; no body offers to persecute them: and since that time, burning is gone out of fashion, and has not been heard of among them.

The *Abbé*, always accurate, says they make the sign of the cross with three fingers: it is quite the contrary; they make it with the thumb and fourth finger; and the orthodox people, with the thumb, the first or second finger.

Mons. Chappe avers, "There never was an instance of any one of the Razkolniki sect being converted." He advances this very lightly, for

at the beginning of this century the half of Russia was divided into some or other of the sects under that name, either openly or secretly : at present their number is very small, and not one person of consequence belongs to them. The most part of the Strelzi were of them. However much Peter the Great wished to avoid persecutions, the Razkolniki were not free during his reign.

The *Abbé* tells us, that he one day in jest enquired, " Whether these sectaries, who would only repeat Hallelujah twice, should go to hell, or to purgatory ; for, as to heaven, that was solely out of question ? " The person (he does not choose to name) answered, with a face crimsoned over, and eyes inflamed, which bespoke the nature of what he was going to say, " We have no purgatory, as in your Romish church : they must be irremissibly damned. He could say no more ; and though in other respects he was a good man, and ever inclined to relieve the distressed, he would perhaps have thought it, if in his power, a very meritorious action to have annihilated me that instant." I have some reason to imagine this scene passed between *Mons. Chappe* and the archbishop of Tobolsk : this prelate was known to be a fanatical persecutor. A few pages back the *Abbé* set him up as a model worthy of imitation ; here he thinks proper not to name him. But, setting aside fanaticism, perhaps he was shocked that the *Abbé* should have mentioned
their

their repeating Hallelujah twice, as their great crime, when he persecuted them for things that seemed of more consequence, and by which, according to the tenets of their religion, they are said to incur damnation. I should be glad to see the *Abbé* attempt to jest (as he calls it) upon such subjects with *Monf. Christophe de Beaumont*, by the grace of God and of the holy see, archbishop of Paris: I fancy he would not be let off so easily as with a crimsoned face and an inflamed eye: the joke might be carried rather farther than he would think agreeable, notwithstanding his fondness for jesting.

Monf. Chappe says, that "Among the number of saints in Russia, after St. Nicholas, St. Andrew is one of those in whom they place the greatest confidence: his relics are at Nowgorod." He gives an account of St. Andrew's voyage by sea, upon a mill-stone; which is just as exact as the rest of his accounts. St. Andrew is held in no greater veneration in Russia than any other saint. The story of the mill-stone belongs to St. Anthony, who is much revered at Nowgorod. The *Abbé* "saw an Archimandrite at Paris, who particularly confirmed to him the truth of all these facts." The *Abbé* ought to trust less to his own comprehension than he does; for undoubtedly, if an Archimandrite at Paris mentioned this anecdote of the legend of the saints, it was St. Anthony he spoke of; and St. Andrew could have

no concern with it at all. Those words "He (the Archimandrite) would rather have submitted to lose his beard, than give up the most trifling circumstance of this narrative, which the *Abbé* was the more surprised at, as he was a man of an enlightened genius," are so very puerile, and the whole so very doubtful, that it is not worth while commenting upon them. *Mons. Chappe* "asked the archbishop an account of the Russian saints, and he mentioned very few." Did the *Abbé* want the book with the history of all the saints? or did he expect the archbishop was to give him an account of them? The prelate might have lent him fourteen volumes in folio, printed in Russian, which would fully have satisfied his curiosity with regard to them: but if the *Abbé* wanted to have it all by word of mouth, it might have furnished conversation for the same length of time as the Arabian tales and nights entertainments, and have been rather less instructive to the *abbé*; and even for a longer space, as notwithstanding the great friendship *Mons. Chappe* mentions to have subsisted between the archbishop of Tobolsk and himself, I am rather inclined to suspect all their conversation was carried on by the help of an interpreter, and therefore was not precisely what it now appears upon paper. It is very certain the prelate understood no language but Greek, Russian, and Latin; and the *Abbé* has proved beyond doubt, he

he did not know any of the three, by the blunders he has headlong constantly run into.

The next paragraph furnishes one of the very few instances this great book contains of the *Abbé's* veracity; and this is his owning frankly he paid off with a lie the archbishop's curiosity about the pope. He says, "The prelate thought it very extraordinary, that his holiness should receive the sacrament seated in an arm-chair. I first denied the fact; but when he told me, that a certain Russian had been an eye-witness of it at the consecration of the last pope, to avoid entering into disputes which are ever disagreeable, I assured him the pope was a cripple." Clear *Mons. Chappe's* book of such like flashes of wit, and see, reader, the size it will be reduced to. "The archbishop of Tobolsk (according to our author) had a dislike to the idea of the motion of the earth; and he quoted passages from St. Paul in support of the contrary opinion." The *Abbé* denies the existence of these passages, though at Rome the opinion of the motion of the earth has been placed in the index of heretical matters, and there supported, by these very citations of the archbishop, from holy writ.

Mons. d'Auteroche says, "Although the priests in Russia are unfit, from their ignorance, to make proselytes, yet they have the folly of attempting to convert every body." Alas! *Abbé*, it little suits you to make this remark; the greatest foundation

foundation you can have had for it, may have been some ecclesiastic using arguments to convince unbelievers of their errors. In France no means, however bad, are thought wrong when employed for the conversion of a heretic. Here follows a story of a prelate, who at dinner undertook to convert the *Abbé's* servant, who was a Lutheran, and would not be converted: the prelate in anger took up a plate to throw it at his head, by way of a *capital argument*. The *Abbé* interposed, and the whole affair was made up by the help of a few glasses of *crematum*. The intention of this story is too evident to leave the least necessity for me to point out, to my reader, either the absurdity or falsity of it.

The *Abbé* is displeased that our Russian churches are so small: the reason is, that our service does not require them larger, as every body is obliged to stand; consequently, room for seats would be useless.

In the next page, reader, you will find what the *Abbé* calls the description of the ceremonies at Easter; but do not flatter yourself, because you saw, at the head of this part of the work, *Of the Greek Religion*, that he will give you any account of the worship on that day: this never once entered his thought; but he tells us a very ingenious cock-and-bull story of two Russians (of the lowest class, probably) coming to wish him a good Easter; and that he ran against one,
and

and from the other; sent them both away, displeased with their reception no doubt; and then fastened his door with two nails, one at top, the other at bottom. "A few hours afterwards he learnt that this was the usual day for men to go to each other's houses in the morning, and introduce themselves into it, by saying, *Jesus Christ is risen*: the answer to which is, *Yes, he is risen*. The people then embrace, give each other eggs, and drink a great deal of brandy." Observe here, reader, that this *Abbé*, so well instructed, so full of knowledge, and so inquisitive about the customs of Russia, did not know that it was their Easter, the greatest day in the Greek church, kept holy above all others, as was customary in the primitive church, and its celebration considered as the most clearly demonstrative mark of adherence to the christian religion, because it was instituted in commemoration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ; and thence it is become usual to say, *Jesus Christ is risen to day*. The custom of giving eggs is only among the common people; and that not alone in Russia, but in Germany, and many other countries, where every one undeniably has heard of Easter eggs: and I fancy the *Abbé* well knew this; but he thought it more convenient just then to be ignorant of it: and he adds, "They drink a great deal of brandy." This alone is a sufficient proof the *Abbé* was mostly among the common people, and rated the whole nation according

according to their customs. He says, "I was particularly attentive in complying with the customs of the country, without which precaution a man makes himself disagreeable to every body." There was but one little thing wanting to give this desire of compliance its proper weight, which was, that the *Abbé* never had the sense to find out what really was the custom, but saw every thing differently from what it was meant to be. And here again is a conclusion drawn, for the manners of the whole nation, from the custom of a few of the tradespeople: you might as well believe, *Abbé*, that the tradespeople and burgessees of French Flanders set the fashions to the Parisians.

Here is what *Mons. Chappe* says: "The afternoon is employed in visiting the women, who also go a visiting themselves: they are generally accompanied by the men; and they enjoy this opportunity of going out very much, as they are greatly confined at other times, whilst the men indulge themselves in drinking the whole day. The room where the visitors are received is set out with all their finery: there is a kind of sideboard raised in form of an altar at the end of the apartment, where all the riches of the family, plates, dishes, knives, forks, bottles, glasses, candlesticks, &c. are set out upon many brackets, and placed in the nicest order. In the middle of the room is a table covered with a carpet, and set out with Chinese sweetmeats, and

a species of raspberries of this country dried in the sun. On coming into the apartment, all the people place themselves, and stand along the benches which surround the table; the women first, and the men next. Then the mistress of the house, with the utmost gravity, and without saying a word, kisses all the company round: when this ceremony is over, the men retire into another apartment, and the women are left by themselves in the first. There is also a table spread with a carpet and sweetmeats in the room which the men go to."

The beginning of this paragraph, where the *Abbé* says the women seldom enjoy the liberty of going out, shews plainly it is the tradesmens wives and lower sort he means, as the women of quality run about perhaps more than in any other part of the world. He says, "The men are indulged in drinking the whole day." He should have added, *Those that have an inclination for it*; and this would greatly diminish this multitude of drinkers; for it is a real fact, that the number of Russians who never taste strong liquors at all greatly exceeds that of those who drink. The arrangement of the apartment, as the *Abbé* describes it, leaves not the smallest doubt, but that it is the lower class he is speaking of. He ought to have said so; but he was better pleased to let his reader suppose it was the custom of the whole nation he was giving an account of: he shewed his discernment in the choice of the model. The manner in which some little tradesman's apartment in Tobolsk was set out

on Easter day, as well deserved being transmitted to posterity, as many things in this useful and entertaining book.

The *Abbé* concludes his account of the *Greek Religion* with the description of the manner in which the tradesman and his wife acquitted themselves in doing the honours of their house: the ladies drank nothing but tea, coffee, and beer—no strong liquors; but the men were almost all drunk at the end of three or four visits. The second visit gave the *Abbé* the head-ach; and he learnt from a Russian the contrivance of spitting into his handkerchief all the brandy they gave him, because they took it ill that he staid at the table of the women, instead of retiring with the men, &c. Are not you at this instant, reader, greatly improved in your knowledge of the Greek religion, from what the *Abbé* in this part of his book has told you of it? And would you ever have expected to meet with so many instructive and amusing anecdotes under this head? Has not the *Abbé* properly answered your expectation from the head of this chapter? and is it not surprisngly kept up to by the description of the entertainment at the Tobolsk tradesman's on Easter day; by the tale of the *crematum*; the satire upon the clergy and people; the very accurate account of the Razkolniki; and by the few words upon the tenets and ceremonies of the Greek church?

Thus it is then, that pompous titles are filled up with what is done and seen in running post through a country.



